

Jordan, Vatican near full ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and the Vatican have exchanged memos of understanding paving the way for establishing full diplomatic relations between them at the level of ambassadors, according to the official spokesman of the foreign ministry. He said the two sides are currently holding intensive diplomatic talks on the issue, noting that soon the two sides will make an official declaration in this regard. The official spokesman of the Holy See has described the relations between Jordan and the Vatican as good. In a press conference in Vatican, he added that his country has good relations with several of the region's countries, pointing in particular to its relations with Jordan and emphasising that the Christian community in the Kingdom have distinguished privileges. Based on the two sides desire to have institutionalised ties, he said, both have started to negotiate the establishment of full diplomatic relations. He pointed that procedures taken in this regard are almost finished and will be declared soon.



Happy New Year

The Jordan Times will not be published on Sunday, Jan. 2, on account of the New Year holiday on Jan. 1. The next issue of the paper will appear on Monday, Jan. 3. The Jordan Times wishes its readers a very happy and prosperous New Year.

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Jordan, PLO revitalise coordination on specific issues

Arafat's two-hour talks with King clear way for action; future ties to be debated later

By Lamis K. Andoni

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have agreed to immediately start coordinating on specific issues of bilateral concern, effectively putting off a definition of the general framework of future relations, according to PLO officials.

The decision was taken at a two-hour meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, when the latter made a surprise visit to Amman and held talks with the King at Queen Alia airport on Thursday evening. The talks were expected to herald a new chapter in Jordanian-Palestinian relations that were strained after the signing of a historic Palestinian-Israeli accord last September.

The decision to focus on specific issues relevant to both sides meant that differences on what form of a relationship should govern Jordanian-Palestinian relations in the future will be brushed aside — in the immediate term — to pave

King and Mubarak exchange views

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak discussed the latest developments in the Arab-Israeli peace talks, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported Friday.

The two leaders "reviewed a host of current Arab issues, the peace process and its latest developments" and ways of working towards a United Arab stance when they spoke by phone on Thursday night, Petra said.

the way for coordination. While Jordan insists that the future relationship should be determined when Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are freed from Israeli occupation, the PLO has been arguing that any agreements in



His Majesty King Hussein Thursday greets Palestine leader Yasser Arafat (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan). any field with Jordan should be concluded on the basis of rela-

tions between two independent states.

But on Thursday, both sides, (Continued on page 5)

PLO presents compromise proposal to end deadlock

By Lamis K. Andoni

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has asked for total control over crossing points to Jericho and Gaza and joint supervision of the other crossings with Israel as a compromise to break the deadlock over the implementation of Palestinian autonomy, PLO officials said on Friday.

The PLO demands were included in counter proposals that Palestinian negotiator Dr. Nabil Shaath has conveyed to the Israeli government. Israeli officials have already declared that the government could consider its original proposals, put forward in Cairo last week, but will not accept to scrap them.

The new Palestinian proposals according to PLO officials, are the following:

The crossings

A. The Palestinian flag

should be hoisted on all entrances to crossings points and borders.

B. Two separate crossing points to Jericho and Gaza, at King Hussein Bridge and Rafah respectively, totally controlled by the Palestinians.

C. Palestinian participation over the other crossing points.

Jericho

A. The area of Jericho extends from Al Nabi Mousa to Ouja reaching the King Hussein Bridge. According to a senior PLO official in Tunis, the Palestinians are giving priority to access between Jericho and the bridge over the area under consideration.

"According to the accord it is a matter of time before the Israeli withdrawal from the Jericho district. But if they had control over the bridge, Jericho would have been like a

detention camp" for Palestinian leadership.

The Gaza Strip

A. The Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip will be confined to the boundaries of the settlements only.

The Israeli proposals allow for Palestinian presence at one of two windows in one checking point around 500 metres inside the borders leaving the actual control in Israeli hands.

Furthermore, Palestinian travellers will have to be cleared by the Israeli window at the checkpoints before proceeding to the Palestinian window.

The Israeli plan also stipulates retaining control of "a three-metre-long security strip" between Jericho and the bridge. The Palestinian coun

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Majali Cabinet seen capable of delivering on its promises

By Nermeen Murad

AMMAN — The year 1993 began with little political fanfare in Jordan as the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker was already running the affairs of the country smoothly for at least a year and most observers expected it to continue in place until the November national elections.

In mid-year, however, an unexpected change of government brought in Abdul Salam Majali, Jordan's chief negotiator to the Middle East peace talks, as head of an apolitical cabinet that was to oversee a controversial amendment to the Election Law and accelerate Jordan's involvement in the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

In retrospect, most Jordanian observers say, the appointment of Dr. Majali signalled a marked swing from a government resigned to dealing with the requirements of democratisation and political accommodation to another that was mandated to clear the path for the fruits of the Middle East peace negotiations.

With the main work of any

government at this time basically cut out for it, mostly on the economic level, the major shift appeared to be in policy towards the Lower House of Parliament and the Middle East peace process and in commitment to the democratic progress in the country.

Sharif Zeid had gained a reputation as a conservative politician who felt a commitment to maintaining a stable relationship between the executive and legislative authorities. This was an especially important task for Sharif Zeid since he assumed the premiership post after Taher Masri was forced to resign as prime minister at the end of a tumultuous five months of tense relations between him and Islamist and conservative deputies in the Lower House.

Committed to his role as "moderator" in the relationship between the government and the Lower House, Sharif Zeid embarked on a policy of containment and accommodation that saw him in constant consultations with Islamists as well as leftists in the House.

Although he was criticised by the press for sometimes

allowing his government to "be contained by" rather than "containing" the opposition, Sharif Zeid's policy ensured smooth sailing for a number of necessary legislations, including the Political Parties Law and the Press and Publications Law. He was also successful in relegating the debate over Jordan's involvement in peace negotiations to a back seat by detaching his government from the day-to-day affairs of the Washington negotiations, intervening only in issues that threaten to bring the whole debate back to the fore.

In fact, observers remember only one or two cases where the government of Sharif Zeid was seen to be actively involved in the talks. The first was when it thwarted an Israeli proposal to create a committee to study United Nations Resolution 242 and draft an interpretation, because it would put into doubt the strongest case of international legitimacy the Arabs had in their negotiations with Israel.

The Sharif Zeid government was seen also to have

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Israel-PLO accord — realities take hold

By Lamis K. Andoni

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI accord, hailed as a historic landmark opening the way for Middle East peace when it was signed in Washington on Sept. 13, hit serious snags by the end of 1993, narrowing hopes for a speedy end to 27 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

If anything, the issues that the two sides have agreed to postpone to the final status negotiations — borders and settlements — are again surfacing as the underlying obstacles to solving the dispute over control over crossing points, the area of Jericho and the extent and scope of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza that have impeded the implementation of Palestinian autonomy.

Most significantly perhaps is that the declaration of principles, as the accord is titled, states that the final status talks aim at the implementation of United Nations Resolution 242 that calls for an Israeli withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967 in return for peace with the Arab states, but it contains

no reference to the resolution as a basis for any arrangements in the interim period. The unconditional postponement of negotiations on settlements and borders and the fact that Resolution 242 cannot be invoked until the final status negotiations have proved to be serious flaws, from the Palestinian viewpoint, hampering Palestinian demands for broader authorities for the Palestinian autonomy that could at least keep the door open for Palestinian statehood.

The stalemate in peace talks is expected to prompt the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to reconsider its negotiating tactics, especially that there are obviously two different, if not contradictory, interpretations to the accord.

As Palestinian officials and analysts predict, the PLO will have to fall back on closer coordination with its Arab partners, particularly Jordan, to pre-empt what it views as Israeli attempts to corner the organisation and pressure it to accept all of its terms.

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12th Parliament fastens belts for effective four-year term

By Ayman Al Safadi

AMMAN — By any serious standards, 1993 was a landmark in the history of parliamentary life in Jordan.

The year provided one of the most crucial tests for the country's nascent democracy. At many points, it looked as if the whole process was coming to an untimely halt. Political parties threatened to boycott the parliamentary elections as the government unilaterally changed the Election Law. Uncertainty threw its shadow over the polls as a decision to postpone them was, reportedly, taken and then reversed.

Towards the end of the year, however, the gloomy picture started to crack. Faith in Jordan's commitment to its "controlled" democracy slowly replaced much of the fear and mistrust in the willingness to strengthen the democratic process that was launched four years ago with much fanfare and great expectations. Democracy passed the test. But it did so with a humble score.

The year began with the 11th Parliament continuing its business as usual. In Janu-

ary, it passed the 1993 budget but only after subjecting the government to severe scrutiny and criticism.

Before it ended its last regular session on March 31, the Lower House of Parliament approved a number of legislations for some of which it won praise and for others blame.

The anti-corruption law and the teachers' union draft law met a popular demand that promised better defined punishment for abusers of public office and resources and a fulfilment of the right to organise for one of society's largest sectors.

But the Press and Publications Law and a legislation on sports and social clubs were received with disappointment and disapproval.

The Press and Publication Law did not allow for the expected level of freedom of speech and expression. It left the government with too much power, the press with too many restrictions. In the view of many, the controls that deputies put on the freedom of expression were stricter than those originally proposed by the executive.

Many people saw the pas-

sing of a law that forces segregation of sexes at recreational clubs as a testimony of the weakness of the secular movement in Jordan. The endorsement of the law by some deputies who claimed to advocate a liberal social agenda reflected their unwillingness to indulge in religious controversies.

It was only after the 11th Parliament finished its term that fears for the continuation of the democratisation process appeared.

In April, the idea of amending the Election Law first surfaced. Deputies opposed the introduction of the one-person, one-vote formula into the electoral system. If the change was imminent, they argued, the House should be recalled into an extraordinary session to debate and approve it.

But such calls went unheeded. The government promised a national dialogue through which representatives of all shades in the political spectrum would draft a new modern election law acceptable to all.

The government claims

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Jordan enters 1994 with confidence in economic moves

By P.V. Vivekanand

AMMAN — Jordan, whose new year in 1989 was marked by serious economic crises that triggered a major plunge in the value of the dinar, enters 1994 with strong confidence that the economic correction programme it adopted five years ago has not only rescued it from economic chaos but also put it on course towards recovery and impressive growth.

The way ahead remains tough, officials and economists say, but all positive signs are there of an increasing awareness to achieve self-reliance by the turn of the century.

The most visible sign of improvement is in the fiscal budget itself. In 1988, the deficit was an unacceptable 24 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It was brought down to 10.3 per cent in 1993, and is projected at 7.2 per cent in 1994, before external assistance.

The Kingdom's economic planners, in coordination with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, hope to bring down the budget deficit

further to around 2.5 per cent in 1995, when the second phase of the restructuring programme prescribed by the IMF ends.

Equally important, local revenues are expected to cover all current expenditures and part of capital expenditures in the JD 1.487 billion budget for 1994, which is now before Parliament.

Economic growth during the past year was estimated at six per cent, and expected to be maintained at 5.5 per cent through 1995. This compares with a nearly 12 per cent growth registered in 1992.

The draft budget, however, does not include the cost of servicing Jordan's foreign debts. The annual cost is estimated at \$400 million.

The government hopes that external financing will be available during 1994 to address the gap. A donors conference arranged by the World Bank in early 1993 came up with \$390 million to help Jordan address its needs to service foreign debts during the year. A similar meeting is expected in 1994.

Local liquidity remains at an all-time high. Ironically, however, fresh credits

through commercial banks are controlled under ceilings set by the IMF.

By and large, bankers say, the ceiling on credits and limits on banks' involvement in the share market worked well during 1993 to avert inflation getting out of control with an excess liquidity in the market.

Inflation during 1993 was estimated to be around 4.5 per cent, a level expected to be maintained in the next phase of the restructuring programme (1993-1998).

The construction sector continued to register an impressive growth during the year, mainly because of the need to address the housing needs of the more than 320,000 expatriates who returned home after the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Industry sources say that expatriates are also investigating their saving in building commercial facilities, accounting for the flurry of construction in the commercial districts of the capital.

Several hundred new commercial entities were registered during the year, and

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1993 — a significant year in Jordan's history

By Sa'eda Kilani

AMMAN — Two major events characterised 1993 for Jordan. The first was the Sept. 14 signing in Washington of the Jordanian-Israeli agenda for peace talks and the second was the election of Jordan's 12th Parliament. Both events will continue to have their effect on the country during 1994.

The past year also witnessed a decline in the strength of Islamists in Parliament and a boost in women's status. The Islamists lost six seats in the Lower House of Parliament while women won one seat in the House, one in the Senate and one in the cabinet.

During 1994, a great deal of progress is expected within the context of peace. Parliament, at first dismissed as submissive, is expected to enliven debate over the country's external and internal affairs. The following is a chronology of major events pertaining to Jordan in 1993:

January:

6: The House endorses 1993 budget despite deep criticism from a majority of the

deputies in one of the longest sessions of the 11th Parliament — 58 deputies voted in favour of the document.

8: Elections of the IAF Executive Council result in the victory of Muslim Brotherhood members gaining 13 out of the 16 seats.

11: The House passes an anti-corruption law.

—After a lull of two months, "Abu Shakoush" strikes again in Whidat.

14: After 22 years in Syrian jails (since 1970), Hakem Al Fayed, former prominent member of the Arab Baath Party, returns home.

16: First leftist party, the Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party, Jordan, is licensed.

17: The Jordanian communist party is licensed.

23: Suleiman Hadidi, a prominent lawyer and the founder of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights — Jordan branch, dies at the age of 70.

24: The Jordan People's Democratic Party is licensed.

27: Parliament passes a law that segregates men and women at recreational cen-

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Jordan and the peace process — rules of the game have changed

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Change was the only constant in Jordan in 1993. More of that is predicted for 1994.

The regional and international winds of change kept blowing on Jordan in 1993, long after the end of the Gulf crisis, whose repercussions continue to be felt today.

The euphoria of the Middle East peace process, launched in October 1991 in Spain, appeared to die during the first three quarters of the year; then came the surprise announcement of a Palestinian-Israeli breakthrough in Oslo in August.

The first half of the year saw Jordan attending several rounds of negotiations with Israel focusing on a draft agenda outlining the principles for a peace agreement. The other Arab parties in the peace process — Syria, Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — were also, over 11 rounds of talks in Washington, making little visible progress in their negotiations with Israel. It was made clear as far back as late 1992 that Jordan was holding back progress in its

negotiations until after the Palestinian-Israeli track made tangible progress. To underline his commitment to the peace process, King Hussein appointed chief Jordanian negotiator Abdul Salam Majali as prime minister in late May and entrusted him with the task of supervising parliamentary elections in November.

During the first half of the year, the PLO, despite a commitment to coordinate moves with its Arab partners, was apparently making progress in secret talks with Israel in several European capitals. These talks culminated in an agreement on Aug. 19 in Oslo, Norway, on a declaration of principles defining the framework for interim self-rule in the occupied territories, beginning with the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

This agreement, which was formally signed at the White House by the PLO's Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, was preceded by mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. This immediately changed the status of the Palestinian nego-

tiators, who were, until then, part of a Jordanian-Palestinian team. The Sept. 13 accord represented a turning point for the peace process. Jordan, which was taken by surprise, hesitated a few days before King Hussein declared his measured support for the deal after receiving details of the accord and assurances from PLO leader Yasser Arafat that Jordanian interests would be taken into consideration in the context of a settlement with Israel.

In 24 hours after the signing of the PLO-Israeli accord, Jordan signed an agreement with Israel on a common agenda defining topics to be tackled in the Jordanian-Israeli track. The agenda itself had been reached in its broad outline (with some minor changes introduced later) as early as October 1992.

As the implications of the Israel-PLO deal for Jordan began to be recognised, raising fears inside the Kingdom, the King made hints that he may postpone the general elections scheduled for Nov. 8 until after the implementation of the deal. The King

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Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin (right) and his Vatican counterpart Monsignor Claudio Celli at the signing Thursday of an agreement on mutual recognition between the Vatican and Israel (AFP photo)

Israel, Vatican sign mutual recognition

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel and the Vatican put aside their dispute over Jerusalem's status to sign an historic agreement on mutual recognition and open a new chapter in their relationship, ending a century of mutual hostility.

The accord is widely expected to lead to a visit to the Holy Land by Pope John Paul II, possibly in 1994. It would be the first such papal pilgrimage in 30 years.

"Behind the agreement, there are thousands of years of history full of hatred, of fear and ignorance with a few islands of understanding, of cooperation and of dialogue," Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said at Thursday's signing in occupied Jerusalem.

Full ambassadors will be named and embassies opened. Subcommittees will work out details and the Israeli government ratifies the accord. Israeli said ambassadors would be appointed within four months.

Forty-five years after the Jewish state was established, moves towards Arab-Israeli peace offered the Vatican and Israel a unique opportunity to forge an accord and put the emotive issue of Jerusalem on the back burner.

Negotiators from the two sides concentrated on bilateral matters in the 15-article agreement, leaving the status of the city, holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims, to be resolved in Middle East peace talks.

"Forty-five years of refusal have now been replaced by political pragmatism," said the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

In the accord, the two sides recognised the unique nature and significance of the Holy Land to them and to the rest of the world. They also committed themselves to fighting anti-Semitism, racism and religious intolerance around the world.

Monsignor Claudio Celli, Vatican under-secretary for foreign relations, who signed for the Vatican, said he hoped the Holy See would now play a bigger role in the peace talks and any future negotiations on Jerusalem.

He also repeated that the Vatican still wanted Jerusalem to be protected by an internationally-guaranteed special status.

"We need an umbrella that can protect the peculiarity of this Holy City, an international warranty in order to protect, to save, to recognise the uniqueness of the city for the three monotheistic religions," Mr. Celli told a news conference.

The Vatican backs the creation of a Palestinian state and

Mr. Celli was due to meet Palestinian on Friday.

The foundations of the Israel-Vatican pact were laid in 1965 when the second Vatican council repudiated the church's previous doctrine of collective Jewish guilt for Jesus's death 2,000 years ago.

Following are excerpts from the "fundamental agreement between the Holy See and the state of Israel."

Preamble

Cites the "unique nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people, and of the historic process of reconciliation and growth in mutual understanding and friendship between Catholic and Jews."

"The Holy See and the state of Israel are committed to appropriate cooperation in combating all forms of anti-Semitism and all kinds of racism and of religious intolerance, and in promoting mutual understanding among communities and respect for human life and dignity."

"The Holy See takes this occasion to reiterate its condemnation of hatred, persecution, and all other manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against the Jewish people and individual Jews anywhere, anytime and by anyone. In particular, the Holy See deplores attacks on Jews and desecration of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries, acts which offend the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, especially when they occur in the same places which witnessed it."

"The state of Israel agrees with the Holy See on the obligation of continuing respect for and protection of the character proper to Catholic sacred places, such as churches, monasteries, convents, cemeteries and their like."

"The Holy See and the state

of Israel recognise that both have an interest in favouring Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land."

"The Holy See and the state of Israel will negotiate in good faith a comprehensive agreement, containing solutions acceptable to both parties, on unclear, unsettled and disputed issues, concerning property, economical and fiscal matters relating to the Catholic Church generally, or to specific Catholic communities or institutions."

"Following the entry into force and immediately upon the beginning of the implementation of the present fundamental agreement, the Holy See and the state of Israel will establish full diplomatic relations at the level of apostolic nunciature, on the part of the Holy See and embassy, on the part of the state of Israel."

Priority of Pope

Pope John Paul II has stood in a synagogue and called Jews and Christians "friends and brethren." He has denounced anti-Semitism and toured sites of Nazi atrocities in his native Poland.

But there also have been moments of sharp anger from Jews, including the Pope's 1982 Vatican audience with Yasser Arafat and his reference to abortion as a "holocaust."

The differences, however, have narrowed significantly in recent years. The Pope had strongly pushed the idea of diplomatic ties as an important step in the process of Roman Catholic-Jewish rapprochement begun with the 1962-65 second Vatican Council, which called for a dialogue between the two faiths.

"This Pope has made Catholic-Jewish relations an integral part of his teaching and his ministry," said Rabbi James Rudin.



Protesters from the anti-Arab Kach movement stage a protest outside the Israeli foreign ministry as the Vatican and Israel Thursday sign an agreement on mutual recognition (AFP photo)

France spurns Swiss request, expels 2 Iranians to Tehran

PARIS (Agencies) — France has expelled two Iranians suspected of a role in the 1990 killing of an Iranian opposition figure, spurning a Swiss extradition request "in the national interest," the premier's office said.

The two suspects, Mohsen Sharif Esfahani, 37, and Ahmad Taheri, 32, were expelled Wednesday night to Tehran, said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Switzerland suspects the pair of taking part in the April 24, 1990 killing near Geneva of Kazem Rajavi and was seeking their extradition. Kazem Rajavi is the brother of Massoud Rajavi, leader of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, the top Iranian opposition group. It is based in Baghdad.

Esfahani and Taheri were arrested in Paris in November 1992 at the demand of Swiss authorities. A Paris court gave a favourable opinion on the extradition request last February, but the affair was held up by French foot-dragging.

The office of Premier Edouard Balladur said in a statement that French authorities decided against the extradition request "for reasons linked to the national interest." It said no further comment would be made.

An aide later told the Associated Press that the two were extradited Wednesday

night to their home country, but did not elaborate.

Swiss diplomats protested to the French foreign ministry Thursday night, and Switzerland was expected to lodge a formal protest Friday, according to Swiss judicial authorities in Bern.

The Mujahedeen also protested to the French. Massoud Rajavi called the move "a great concession to the mullahs in power in Iran," according to a statement by the group.

Kazem Rajavi, Iran's first post-revolutionary ambassador to the United Nations, resigned his post in 1980 and became a vocal opponent of the Islamic government in Tehran.

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq has blamed the Iranian government for his death, an accusation denied by Tehran.

Mr. Rajavi expressed his strong protest for the failure to hand over professor Kazem Rajavi's assassins to the Swiss judiciary.

In an unusually sharp statement, the Swiss justice ministry said that the refusal to hand over Esfahani and Taheri was "disconcerting."

"The charge d'affaires of the Swiss embassy (in Paris) protested to the French foreign ministry on Thursday evening against this breaking of the European extradition accord. A formal protest note will be delivered on Friday," it added.

According to the justice ministry, the French foreign ministry said last month approval had been given for handing over the two, but the extradition was announced several times, it was never carried out.

France and Iran have had rocky relations since the 1979 Iranian revolution, breaking then repairing ties on several occasions.

The darkest period was triggered by a series of bombings in Paris in 1986, carried out by an Iranian-backed network, that killed 13 people.

Iran is known to be angry at France for its recent decision to allow Massoud Rajavi's wife to reside in France. She had previously been living at a Mujahedeen military base in Iraq.

Switzerland and France have cooperated in the past in extradition cases involving Iranians in recent years.

On Aug. 27, 1991, Switzerland turned over to France Ali Vakili Rad, an Iranian suspected of taking part in the assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar weeks earlier. In May 1992, Switzerland extradited another Iranian to France, Zeyad Sarhad, another suspect in the Bakhtiar killing.

A 1987 European convention on extradition obliges France and Switzerland to cooperate in such matters.

Tourists to Turkey and Egypt under fire in '93

NICOSIA (R) — A young couple on a cycling tour of Turkey spend five weeks as reluctant guests of Kurdish guerrillas. Police outsiders escort tour buses to the pyramids of Egypt and a popular Cairo cafe is shattered by a bomb.

Tourists found themselves targets in 1993 as conflicts flared in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.

Kidnappings, bombs and shootings prompted them to seek safer destinations and robbled countries of vital tourist dollars.

"It couldn't be worse," Club Mediterranean Chairman Serge Trigano lamented in Paris last week, saying political unrest was a big reason why the French holiday group had slumped into the red and had to close villages in Egypt and Turkey, among other places.

In Egypt, a gun and bomb attack on a bus in old Cairo last Monday put foreign visitors back in the firing line of Islamic militants after a six-month lull.

Eight Austrians and eight Egyptians were hurt in the attack, which the militant Al Qaeda Al Islamiyah said it carried out in revenge for the execution of its members.

In June a bomb exploded on the Pyramids road, injuring 22 people on a tourist bus, including five Britons.

In all, three tourists have been killed and 36 wounded since the militants, who are trying to bring down the government and set up a strict Islamic state, began hitting tour buses and River Nile cruises in October 1992.

The assaults have devastated the tourism industry, once Egypt's highest hard currency earner at \$3 billion a year.

Official figures show 3.2 million tourists visited Egypt in 1992 but only 2.3 million in the first 11 months of 1993. The government has tried to play down the crisis.

"The violence" is going down now, and our country is much more safer than any other place in the world," President Hosni Mubarak told U.S. television in October.

Hours later a gunman walked into a Cairo hotel restaurant and shot dead two Americans, a Frenchman and an Italian.

Turkey, a popular destination for Western Europeans for its beaches and its ancient sites, had the bloodiest year yet in the nine-year-old Kurdish separatist insurgency.

The Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) warned foreigners they would visit at their own risk. Seeking to publicise their cause, the guerrillas kidnapped at least 19 foreigners in the southeast.

Bombs exploded in the southern resort of Antalya, Kusadasi on the Aegean coast and in Istanbul in June and July, killing a Turk and wounding 46 people including at least 12 foreigners.

The kidnapped foreigners were all released. Two of them, Briton David Rowbottom and his Australian cousin, Tania Miller, spent five weeks as hostages after they were seized while on a cycling tour.

"We're going on with the trip," Mr. Rowbottom said. "Others were not so lucky. Tourism officials say Turkey lost an estimated \$1 billion as a result of the PKK campaign."

Tourism Minister Abdul Kadir Ates said the number of visitors dropped in summer months after the bombings but the decline was offset by an unexpected increase in October and November.

A huge bomb blast in Beirut in December showed that Lebanon, recovering from 15 years of civil war, still has a long way to go before tourists again flock to what was once the playground of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Hurd due in Mideast this week

LONDON (R) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd visits the frontline states in the Middle East peace process this week to reinforce the interest of the former colonial power in the evolution of a Palestinian state.

Aides said on Friday Mr. Hurd was determined to show that Britain, which once ruled Palestine under a mandate, remained committed to helping the peace process.

"We don't fool ourselves into thinking we are centre stage in the peace process," said one official. "But we think we can help move things forward constructively."

Mr. Hurd will not be carrying any secret messages between stops on his week-long tour, which takes in Lebanon, Israel, the occupied territories and Jordan, his advisers said. He will also visit Malta.

In the Middle East he will be talking to key players in the peace process and offering expanded British aid to support the emerging Palestinian state in the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.

It follows trips this year to Syria and the Gulf states.

Britain is deeply aware that the new Palestinian entity needs much help in establishing the infrastructure of a semi-state within a state. London is offering help with central banking, policing, a radio station and law drafting.

Much of the help is within a \$600 million European Union (EU) aid package for the Palestinian territories but Mr. Hurd is expected to offer additional assistance when he visits Gaza on Wednesday.

The help may be targeted towards Palestinians building on their existing strengths of sophisticated knowledge and experience of world financial markets.

"The new Palestinian entity should not be regarded as a basket case," said one diplomat.

NEWS IN BRIEF

S. Korea to withdraw Somalia soldiers

SEOUL (R) — South Korea said Friday it would withdraw its military contingent to the U.N. force in Somalia if any drastic changes there threatened the safety of the unit. A 250-strong military engineering unit, codenamed "Evergreen," is carrying out road repair and construction work in the war-torn African country. "The defence Ministry has decided it will withdraw the evergreen unit ahead of the original schedule if serious problems emerge for the safety of the unit and logistical support for it," a ministry statement said. The South Korean unit is scheduled to stay in Somalia until next July, beyond the departure dates of several other contingents. Seoul did not expect security and logistical problems even after the departure of U.S. and other western forces, but wanted assurances from the United Nations that security and logistical support would be maintained, the Defence Ministry statement said.

Norwegian peacekeeper killed in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A Norwegian peacekeeper died when his bicycle was struck by a truck in the U.N. compound in Mogadishu on Thursday, a U.N. military spokesman announced Friday. Per Eivand Igersen's death is the first for the Norwegian contingent of 124 soldiers. In a separate incident an Italian soldier, Tommaso Carozza, was killed on Thursday when the armoured vehicle in which he was travelling overturned on the Mogadishu-Balad road. He was the ninth Italian peacekeeper to die in Somalia since the U.N. operation was launched on Dec. 9 last year.

Prominent U.S. rabbi dies

NEW YORK (R) — Marshall Meyer, a prominent Jewish rabbi known for his human rights activism in Argentina, has died of cancer at the age of 63 in New York, his synagogue said Thursday. A U.S. citizen who lived in Argentina for more than 25 years, Mr. Meyer was a leading human rights campaigner under the rule of the military junta there between 1976 and 1983. His human rights activism won him Argentina's highest decoration for a non-Argentine citizen, the Order of the Liberation San Martin. "He felt that human rights were God's most explicit message to the clergy," said Jacobo Timerman, a prominent Argentine journalist who was kidnapped and tortured during the military regime. Mr. Timerman told Reuters from Uruguay that Mr. Meyer ventured into the junta's jails despite repeated humiliation by guards.

Journalists asks Iran about jailed editor

NICOSIA (R) — The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has asked Iran's top judge to disclose charges on which an Iranian newspaper editor was jailed or to release him. Salam newspaper said last week that its editor Abbas Abdi, arrested and held in solitary confinement since July, had been sentenced to one year in jail and been given a suspended sentence of 40 lashes after a secret trial. In a letter faxed to the head of Iran's judiciary, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, the CPJ asked him to disclose the charges against Mr. Abdi and urged the editor's release "unless he has been convicted of charges deemed criminal by international standards." A copy of the letter, sent to Reuters in Nicosia on Wednesday, said the committee feared Mr. Abdi might have been persecuted for exercising his rights as a journalist upheld by the universal declaration of human rights. Salam said Mr. Abdi's sentence was relayed by telephone to his wife. Mr. Abdi was one of the leaders of the students who seized the U.S. embassy in Iran in 1979 and held its staff hostage for 444 days. His paper often publishes criticism of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's liberal economic policies.

Explosions caused damage in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (AP) — Separate explosions damaged a downtown bar and a court building Thursday, but no injuries were reported, the Anatolia agency said. A Molotov cocktail went off at the bar and sparked a fire. Anatolia said a Muslim fundamentalist underground organisation, the great East Islamic Raiders, claimed responsibility, the report said. Another explosion at 7:30 p.m. (1630 GMT) at the back door of a tribunal court at Bakirkoy district also caused damage, the dispatch added. The underground leftist urban guerrilla organisation, Dev Sol (revolutionary left) claimed responsibility.

Kuwait — China defence accord in final stages

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait is close to reaching a defence accord with China, a Kuwaiti newspaper said Friday. The newspaper Al Anbaa quoted Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah as saying: "Communications with China regarding the accord are being conducted through the foreign ministry, they have reached their final stages." Sheikh Ali did not elaborate on the terms of the agreement. It would be the fifth defence agreement between Kuwait and a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council since the United States and its allies drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991. Kuwait already has such agreements with the United States, Britain, France and Russia.

Cleric predicts Islam will conquer 'corruption'

TEHRAN (AFP) — A senior Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, predicted Friday that Islam would soon conquer the "corrupt" Christian world. Speaking at prayers, Ayatollah Jannati said financial and political corruption were threatening to destroy Christian societies. "We hope that Islam would continue to spread at its present fast pace and soon conquer these countries," he said without naming them. Ayatollah Jannati, who is a senior member of the Council of Experts — a body overseeing legislation to ensure laws conform to Islamic principles — said the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran was attracting many Europeans.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 777-1111

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 — Los Angeles (U.S. Fox)
18:00 — News (U.S. Fox)
18:30 — News (U.S. Fox)
19:00 — News (U.S. Fox)
19:30 — News (U.S. Fox)
20:00 — News (U.S. Fox)
20:30 — News (U.S. Fox)
21:00 — News (U.S. Fox)
21:30 — News (U.S. Fox)
22:00 — News (U.S. Fox)

PRAYER TIMES

06:00 — Sunrise
06:15 — Sunrise
06:30 — Sunrise
06:45 — Sunrise
07:00 — Sunrise
07:15 — Sunrise
07:30 — Sunrise
07:45 — Sunrise
08:00 — Sunrise

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 777-1111
St. George Church Tel. 777-1111
St. Joseph Church Tel. 777-1111
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 777-1111

De la Salle Church Tel. 777-1111

Terrace Church Tel. 777-1111

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 777-1111

Anglican Church Tel. 777-1111

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 777-1111

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 777-1111

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 777-1111

Armenian International Church Tel. 777-1111

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 777-1111

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 777-1111

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 777-1111

Church of Nazareth Tel. 777-1111

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

The Kingdom will be affected by a depression with winds becoming westerly moderate and temperatures will gradually drop. Clouds will appear at different altitudes and rain will fall occasionally in the afternoon of this country. In Amman, it will be cloudy with a chance of showers. Winds will

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Dr. Jamal Marjan 777-1111

Dr. Mubarak Haddad 777-1111

Dr. Jamal Marjan 777-1111

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Dr. Jamal Marjan 777-1111

ZARQA:

Dr. Yusef Alawad 988-005

Khalid Pharmacy 988-017

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Department 657111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Rescue 600141

Civil Defence Emergency 191

Fire Brigade 192 621111, 627777

Blind Bank 777121

Telephone Police 843402

24-hour Security Department 601176

Hotel Complaints 601176

Price Complaints 601176

Water and Sewerage 601176

Amman Municipality 601176

Complaints 601176

Tel. phone information 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Telephone Complaints 601176

Water found in Wadi Qattar

Amman mayor announces plans for municipality building in Ras Al Ein

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi Wednesday announced that workers involved in paving the ground for the establishment of a national park in Wadi Qattar, near Abu Alanda district, have struck a new spring sufficient for irrigating the trees for a long time.

Dr. Abbadi told the Jordan Times Wednesday that with the discovery of the spring, there will be no more need to purchase water, through water tanks to fill the water towers to feed the drip irrigation system installed in the grounds of the park.

He also announced that the municipality was now preparing designs for a new municipality at Ras Al Ein area. He added that the complex would include scores of buildings to be set up on 168 dunums of land.

Dr. Abbadi said that some of the land for the municipality was appropriated from the local residents whose homes will be demolished in the course of structuring the complex.

The complex on which work is expected to commence in 1994, would include administration buildings as well as



Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi answering a question from a journalist during a press conference Thursday.

separate buildings to serve as a modern library, multi-purpose halls and buildings for other facilities and utilities.

Dr. Abbadi said that the old Roman Amphitheatre, near the Roman Amphitheatre, would not be used once the new one

becomes operational.

He noted that the location of the complex was carefully chosen as the site lies in a central area accessible to residents in various districts. Furthermore, the municipality owns 80 per cent of the site

which has not been properly utilised.

Referring to the residents of the appropriated land and homes, he said it was inhabited by 48 families, or about 272 citizens, who would receive fair compensation.

Radio Jordan begins

24-hour service today

AMMAN (J.T.) — As of today, Radio Jordan will start round-the-clock broadcasting, raising from 20 hours to 24 hours Arabic services of news, music as well as cultural and other programmes, according to an announcement Friday by the Radio Director Fayez Qudah.

Mr. Qudah said Radio Jordan has conducted a general survey over this matter and received public views about the diversification of programmes.

The change includes the introduction of a two-shift French programme instead of one, the first extending from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., and second from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Mr. Qudah said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, noting that the two-shift French programme will include classical music.

Thanks to the boosting of the Kharraneh transmission station, the radio programmes will be heard in most parts of the world, and will benefit Jordanian expatriates in many countries, Mr. Qudah pointed out.

In order to cover various world events, Radio Jordan has appointed correspondents in Cairo, Tunis, Beirut, London, Washington, Paris and Geneva in addition to the local correspondents around the Kingdom, said Mr. Qudah.

He said that new equipment had been bought specifically for the purpose of boosting the broadcasting services.



His Majesty King Hussein listens to Culture Minister Amin Mahmoud during the ceremony held to honour writers and artists.

King presents awards to writers, artists

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has expressed his pride and appreciation of the efforts of Jordanian writers and intellectuals in promoting culture and education in Jordan.

Addressing the winners of the state's awards for their outstanding works in 1992, the King urged the writers and intellectuals to double their efforts to further promote cultural activities in the interest of the Jordanian and Arab people.

The King, who received the seven winners at the Royal Court in the presence of Culture Minister Amin Mahmoud,

later presented the awards to the winners and received a copy of the Holy Koran as a token gift from Dr. Mahmoud.

According to the Ministry of Culture's announcement on Dec. 22, the awards are worth JD 5,000 — JD 10,000 benefiting Dr. Ibrahim Saafan for his works in short stories; Dr. Kamel Saeed for his work in social sciences; artist Muna Saudi and Karim Tumeih for their work in art; Jamal Abu Hamdan for theatre work; Dr. Saad Hijazi and Dr. Ibrahim Khatib for studies on children growth and development in Jordan.

In a brief speech, Dr.

Mahmoud voiced the winners' recitation of the King's blessing of the cultural movement in Jordan.

He stressed the fact that King Hussein has always been a cultural activities and has supported works of other Arab intellectuals.

Present at the ceremony were Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, His Royal Highness Prince Raad Ben Zeid the chief of the Royal Palace, as well as the King's advisers and His Royal Highness Ali Ben Nasser, the King's personal secretary.



Ministry of Tourism Secretary General presents award to Amman Khamash in appreciation of his contribution to tourism and archaeology in the Kingdom.

Ministry honours Jordanian architect, Italian professor

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Tourism Wednesday presented Italian professor Michele Piccirillo and Jordanian architect Amman Khamash with the Tourism Shield in recognition of their efforts and contributions to tourism and archaeological fields in the Kingdom.

Prof. Piccirillo has carried out studies on Jordan's archaeological sites, especially in the city of Madaba, south of Amman, and wrote several publications about Jordan's mosaics in Madaba and Monte Nebo.

Mr. Piccirillo, who was born in Italy in 1944, belongs to the Order of the Franciscan

Fathers of Terra Sancta custody and is a professor of Biblical history and geography at the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Italy.

Mr. Khamash has drawn up the designs for the ministry's building, conducted renovation work in Umm Qais and other buildings now serving as a residence near Tabaqat Fahl.

Mr. Khamash also conducted restoration on the Sharif Hussein Ben Ali home in Aqaba as well as a number of buildings in Mckawer and Madaba.

The ministry's Secretary General Nasir Atallah presented the shields.

Amman-Jerash road to open in March

AMMAN (Petra) — Public Works and Housing Minister Abdul Razzaq Ensour Friday said the Amman-Jerash road will be opened for traffic in March, as was originally scheduled. During an inspection tour aimed at assessing progress of work on the road, Dr. Ensour stressed that work was proceeding well and that the road would be completed within 60 working days.

Dr. Ensour attributed the delay in completing work on time to landslides which, he said, had obstructed progress of work which started in 1988.

The minister was accompanied by Irbid members of the Lower House of Parliament. The deputies expressed satisfaction with the progress of work on the road and called on the government to construct

an alternative road to be used in case any landslides occur before the road opens to traffic.

Irbid Governor Fayez Abbadi said work on this road had progressed very well and was beyond expectations given the nature of the land where landslides occurred.

Jerash Mayor Ali Qokara stressed the importance of this road, and said it was the artery feeding Jerash. He called for connecting Jerash with the new roads so that Jerash would not be turned into an empty city because the new road does not go through it.

He stressed that the diversion of traffic from Jerash over the past five years have caused financial and moral damage to the tourism sector in Jerash.

New regulation makes staff changes at radio and television corporation

AMMAN (Petra) — Directors of Jordan Television and Radio Ibrahim Shahzadah and Fayez Al Qudah will be serving as deputy directors general of Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTVC) as of Jan. 1, according to the new regulation for the corporation's technical staff, which takes effect Saturday. Under the new regulation, three departments and three directorates have been created and will be functional as of today.

The three departments include Jordan Arab Satellite Channel with Zeid Fariz as its director, the engineering affairs department with Ali Abu Kweik as its director and the administrative and financial department with Hani Faraj as its director.

Each of these three directors will also serve as assistant to the director general of the corporation.

The three new directorates include the staff training and development directorate with Mahmoud Al Shahid as its director, the commercial advertising and marketing directorate with Walid Sinawi as its director, and the international relations department with Fatima Masri as its director.

The new regulation provided for the establishment of a planning and coordination committee, headed by the director general of the corporation.

The committee groups the two deputy directors as well as directors of the departments and directorates.

Brit. n demands
(Continued from page 10)
ign Office had no role in his decision not to visit government-held Sudan.

"The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in particular Mr. Streams, did all they could to assist my preparations on this occasion. But the decision was mine alone," he said.

The Carey visit to Sudan has focused attention on an area where Christians have been under attack.

In September, an Anglican bishop was flogged in Khartoum after an Islamic court found him guilty of adultery. The right Rev. Peter Al Berish was given 80 strokes of the cane.

Archbishop Carey condemned the flogging. Pope John Paul has also lambasted the government for human rights violations.

Human rights groups have accused the Khartoum government of harassing Christians.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King sends congratulatory cables to Sudanese, Cuban and Swiss presidents

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday sent a cable to Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir congratulating him on his country's independence day and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Sudanese people further progress and prosperity. The King also sent a congratulatory cable to President Fidel Castro of Cuba on the occasion of Cuba's national day. The King wished President Castro continued good health and happiness and the people of Cuba further progress and prosperity. Also Friday the King sent a third cable to the newly-elected President of the Swiss Federation congratulating him on his election as President of the Swiss Federation.

Jordan to attend FANA meetings

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the 21st Conference of the Federation of the Arab News Agencies' (FANA) general assembly which will open in Damascus Monday. The directors of the Arab news agencies will discuss in the two-day conference several technical, administrative and financial issues as well as a report on the activities of the general assembly. They will also discuss recommendations taken by the federations engineers committee on linking all Arab news agencies with each other by satellites. Jordan will be represented at the conference by Abdullah Utom, director general of the Jordan News agency, Petra.

Jordan to produce phosphoric acid

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Indian Company for Chemicals, an affiliate of Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and Southern Industries Corporation Limited, a leading Indian company, are establishing a phosphate acid factory in the free industrial zone in Shidieh in South Jordan. The Company's sources said the factory's annual production capacity would be 224,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid.

Society leases land for farming

THE JORDAN VALLEY (Petra) — The Rural Women's Cooperation Society has rented two agricultural pieces of land in Khirbet Fares and Al Balou'a areas in Al Qasr district by the General Antiquities Department and foreign excavation teams. The department's Karak inspector Nabeel Baqa'in has said. Mr. Baqa'in said the department has been carrying out renovation works at Al Karak Fortress with the aim of preserving it and attracting tourists to the area.

New archaeological sites discovered

KARAK (Petra) — New archaeological sites were discovered in Khirbet Fares and Al Balou'a areas in Al Qasr district by the General Antiquities Department and foreign excavation teams. The department's Karak inspector Nabeel Baqa'in has said. Mr. Baqa'in said the department has been carrying out renovation works at Al Karak Fortress with the aim of preserving it and attracting tourists to the area.

Statue of Virgin Mary stolen from Madaba church

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Greek Orthodox Church officials in Madaba Thursday announced the disappearance of the statue of Virgin Mary from a shrine in the basement of the church.

The treasurer of the church discovered the disappearance of the one-metre tall statue when he went to pray and notified the police who are investigating the incident, according to a police report.

Preliminary investigations by police indicate that the statue, which was placed in a wooden and glass closet for visitors to see, was missing after someone broke the door

of the closet and took the statue.

According to Mr. Basem Karadsheh, the treasurer of the church, thousands of visitors of all nationalities visited the church the previous day. He did not, however, try to connect this with the disappearance of the statue.

Madaba, a city 30 kilometres south of Amman, has a great number of archaeological sites.

A Madaba resident told the Jordan Times that people in Madaba were disappointed and angry because of the incident.

"This statue was almost 100 years old and it has been in the church since it was established," she said.

The woman said the statue has little value in terms of money but it was a dear symbol for people who visited the church. She added that the statue was decorated in a way that could not be reproduced. "It is a shame that the statue was stolen from the church," she said, adding that the statue was used for special occasions and that on Virgin Mary Day.

The statue has not been found, according to the woman, but police were still investigating the case.

"I hope whoever took the statue will return it to the church because they (the thieves) will not be happy for the rest of their lives," she said.

Ontario premier arrives next week

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister of the Canadian Province of Ontario Bob Rae who will arrive here Jan. 4 on a four-day visit to Jordan for talks with senior Jordanian officials on bilateral relations and scopes of cooperation in the economic and commercial fields. Mr. Rae, who will be heading two official and economic delegations, will meet with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Sataa Al Hassan, and Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf.

Hisban health centre to start work in July

MADABA (J.T.) — Work has started on the Hisban health centre, in the Madaba district, and health services are expected to be provided in July 1994 when the centre will be completed.

Health Minister Abdul Rahim Maltas, who laid the foundation stone of the new centre at a ceremony Thursday, said the Ministry of Health was determined to provide health services to all Jordanians and was ready to set up primary health care services and comprehensive health centres in all districts. He noted that the Hisban centre would be built on a 323 square metres of land and would cost JD 88,000.

The centre, which would be offering mother and child care, dentistry services and laboratory tests in a seven-month time, would serve the Hisban town as well as the neighbouring villages of Mushaggar, Al Arab and Munsheir, all in the Madaba district.

Later, the minister opened a laboratory and a chest disease centre in the eastern sector of the town. He also opened Al Mamounah clinic at Hisban.

Dr. Maltas inspected health services at the refugee camp in Madaba and met at Al Fatah Health Centre with physicians and medical workers to learn about their demands to upgrade health services.

The minister learnt from district Governor Hashem Al Fozay that the Madaba District has a total of 29 health centres plus five dentistry centres and five laboratories.

Chinese labour team to visit Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — A Chinese delegation headed by the president of the Labour Affairs Council at the Republic of China will arrive here on a four-day visit to Jordan for talks with Jordanian officials on expanding scopes of cooperation between Jordan and the Republic of China. The delegation, which includes for Chinese officials specialised in professional and occupational safety and health and vocational training will visit the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) to have first hand information on safety measures applied there. The delegation will also visit the VTC's centres and will discuss methods of training and occupational health, among other things.

Tourism official retires

By Elias Nazzari
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nasir Atallah Friday ended his term as secretary general of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities after a 32-year service in public administration.

Born in 1934, Mr. Atallah started his career in 1961 when he served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until 1968 when he was appointed as assistant to the chief of Royal Protocol until 1970.

He later served as private secretary to His Majesty King Hussein until 1976 when he became Ministry of Tourism Secretary General until last week when the Council of Ministers announced his acceptance of his resignation.

According to Al Rai daily Friday, Dr. Nazih Dabbas was tipped to succeed Mr. Atallah. Mr. Dabbas is currently serving as director of Gateway Hotel, near the Queen Alia International Airport.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Abdul Jabbar Salman on bedouin culture at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition on the 16th anniversary of the death of French novelist Guy De Maupassant at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art '93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrelnissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).

Jordan Times

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On ties and Jerusalem

THE AGREEMENT between Israeli and the Vatican to establish political ties, which was signed in Jerusalem on Thursday, is most unfortunate since it amounts to recognition by the Holy See of Israel's sovereignty over the Holy City. In article 3 of the agreement, Israel, without mention of Jerusalem, "recognises the Catholic Church's right to practise its religious, moral, educational, and charitable activities..." while the "church recognises the state's right to practise its authority." The fact that the negotiations leading to the accord were conducted in Jerusalem and the agreement itself was signed in the city can only reinforce that conclusion.

We understand that the Vatican had come under immense pressure to conclude such an agreement with Israel by constantly having been reminded of all the atrocities that were committed against the Jews in Europe over the centuries, with the blessing of the church on many occasions. True, the Vatican is certainly not a superpower in the physical sense of the word. Yet, being the spiritual leader of 1,000 million Catholic faithfuls, the Pope, in whatever action he takes, serves as a guiding example for those millions.

It is therefore disappointing to see the Vatican turning a blind eye to Israel's description of the occupied Arab lands as "disputed territories." Equally disappointing is to witness the Vatican's deputy foreign minister, Monsignor Claudio Celli, sign the document of mutual recognition with his Israeli counterpart Yossi Beilin in Jerusalem.

The Vatican cannot claim, as it did when it signed the agreement Thursday, a stranger to all temporal conflicts, because it is not. In the past decade and during Pope John Paul's reign, the Vatican was party to almost every single "temporal conflict" in Europe, Latin America and Africa. It chose to oppose and fight communism in Eastern Europe. It sided with the U.S. in fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. And Pope John Paul himself did not hesitate to scold his Sudanese hosts last year for the brutal war in south Sudan.

Muslim and Christian Arabs are disheartened therefore to see the Vatican take a step towards legitimising Israel's occupation and annexation of the city and the Holy See's backtracking in commitment pledged to Arabs and Palestinians. This move at this crucial time will only strengthen the hands of Israel and weaken the Palestinian cause at a time where every genuine effort should be exerted to solve the Middle East peace conflict justly and honourably.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

UNDER THE title "Negotiations return to square one," Al-Dustour said Friday it is clear now that the Oslo deal, between Israel and the PLO, has failed, as it is not being implemented. The paper accused the Rabin government of being responsible for the failure due to its adamant position and refusal to carry out the deal which would lead to a Palestinian state in five years. The PLO leaders who signed the deal in Washington on Sept. 13, have refused Israel's exploiting the deal's provisions, thus rendering the contents of the agreement meaningless, added the paper. In the light of the failed meetings held Oslo, Paris and Cairo, one can only observe the intransigent Israeli position and its interests which smell of conspiracy against the Oslo deal as a result of pressure of the Jewish settlers and other parties, said the paper. It is doubtless, continued the paper, that the negotiations over the Middle East crisis will meet the same fate and will render the area prone to further violence and tension and will return the parties involved back to square one.

COMMENTING ON THE PLO leader's visit to Amman Friday, and his talks with King Hussein, Sawt Al-Shaab said that the meeting was intended to bolster inter-Arab coordination, in the face of Israel's intransigent position vis-a-vis the peace negotiations. Failure to coordinate their positions and their adamant demands over the return of Arab land occupied since 1967 would reduce the Arabs' and Palestinians' chance to regain their usurped territories, said the paper. It said that therefore Mr. Arafat's meeting with the King, and earlier with the heads of Egypt and Syria, should be regarded as part of the ongoing efforts on the part of Arab leaders towards reaching a common stand and ensuring a stronger Arab negotiating power, added the paper. Warning against failure to coordinate Arab stands, the paper said, that the Israelis would seize the chance to further cause divisions among the Arab governments and open the door wide for the Rabin government to further practise its intransigent position at the negotiating table. It is only through lack of pan-Arab solidarity that Israel aims to impose hegemony on the Arab World, warned the paper.

Jordanian Perspective

Putting the Arab and national house in order is a priority in New Year

By Dr. Musa Keilani

JORDAN and the rest of the Middle East region enter the New Year with hopes high that an end to decades of conflict and suffering of its people could be at hand. For once, there is tangible movement in efforts to find a equitable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and we all are hopeful that the negotiations with Israel would produce a settlement based on the legitimate political, territorial, economic, social, cultural and human rights of all peoples in the region.

We have lived through the agony of seeing our people kicked out of homes, locked up without any pretence of justice and law, chased and attacked in the region and beyond, denied the slightest trace of their legitimate rights, humiliated and left to the mercy of natural elements and enemies for survival, and the "strategic" economic and political ambitions of foreign powers forced down our throats. That has been our experience for decades, and what made it worse was the disarray among ourselves and the lack of vision that characterised collective Arab action to resist and reverse the course of events.

But then lamenting over shortcomings of the past does not get us anywhere. We in Jordan have always kept pride in our pragmatism under the guidance of our leadership, and have survived the test of time through some of the most critical moments in the history of any country, and there is little doubt that we all have learnt a lot from past mistakes and ourselves as well as others, not to repeat them and getting caught in the cycle of having to fight against all odds despite being armed with honourable stands and commitment to noble causes.

As we enter the New Year with hopes for a better future, the first priority facing us is putting the Arab house in order. I do not agree with the notion of some that the "Arab Order" is past restoration or that there was no "Arab Order" to start with. History has proved that on a few occasions the Arab states were able to sideline their internal differences and adopt collective action to defend their collective rights and interests. The 1980s Iran-Iraq war is the most outstanding example, where a strong Arab stand behind Iraq's defiance and prevented the danger of a total scrambling of the power of power in the Arab Gulf. Of course, what followed a few years later was catastrophic to all of us, but then we should look at our own memory of the Gulf crisis as the marked absence of a coherent Arab understanding of what had happened and what was to come. And we all are still paying the price for those who believe they came off the best from the conflict will soon find out their actual losses.

Jordan has lived with the fallout from the rejection of the

state of Israel for a better part of its modern existence as a coherent national entity, and there cannot be any escape from the fact that the hopes and aspirations of Jordan and Jordanians, regardless of their origins, would be closely linked to the repercussions and dimensions of the unaddressed Arab-Israeli conflict.

All said and done, let me sum up our hopes and dreams for the New Year (there is nothing to snip us from wishing, is there?):

— That the Arab states appreciate and realise that unless they throw their collective weight behind those among them who are actually involved in negotiations with Israel it is a foregone conclusion that the net outcome of the peace process would be far short of what we all aspire for.

The Arabs who continue to live in the past, still harbouring hostilities towards other Arabs stemming from perceptions of conspiracy and enmity against each other, should clear the webs in their thinking and appreciate that adopting principled positions does not mean plotting against anybody.

No doubt the unconscious realisation of these facts is there in the Arab mind, whether in the Maghreb or the Mashreq, but what we need today is practical action to put the Arab thoughts together with a view to coming up with a collective strategy, whether in terms of support for the Arab negotiating strategy with Israel or appreciating that the economic boycott of Israel is the best, and perhaps the only, card that the Arab World has up its sleeve to deal with the situation.

— That Israel realises that detested solutions from a point of military strength could produce only make-shift settlements and cannot lead to durable stability and security. It has to make peace with the Arab people by meeting their aspirations based on justice, logic and reason.

Israel and its guardian angels understand and accept the fact that the kind of solution they are trying to impose on the Arabs is void of international legitimacy and is based on an obvious rejection of the legitimate rights of people to self-determination — an ethic that the modern world claims that it is built on.

— That the Palestinian leadership wakes up in the reality that the best card it could play at this point in time as ever is to show the world that the Palestinian entity that would emerge in the now occupied territories would be a shining example for democracy and respect for human rights in the region. Then, and only then, the leadership could hope to enlist the kind of international support it badly needs in its tough negotiations with Israel.

— That those among us whose positions are based on extremist thinking reconsider their rejection of the realities on the ground and of a gradual process that holds out hopes for an equitable solution. The state of Israel, whether we like it or not, is a reality on the ground, and, given the geopolitics of the region and the international scene, it is a pipedream to envision an Arab Muslim entity between "the (Mediterranean) sea and the (Jordan) river." Indeed it is a bitter pill to swallow, and none of us likes it, but then pragmatism compels us to accept the cold facts and bitter realities and seek to make the best out of the given, with a determination that all our moves and actions be oriented towards bringing about an international appreciation of the legitimacy of our cause.

— That Jordan be spared from the pressure that it is facing to undertake moves that are not compatible with the state of progress (or the lack of it) in its efforts to address its legitimate concerns and achieve its inalienable rights through negotiations with Israel. While the pressure may not be in a very direct, firm and nature, ignoring Jordan's repeated appeals that such moves are nothing but political suicide and mean abandoning its legitimate rights is in the final analysis alarm of pressure.

— That the democratisation of Jordan continues unimpeded and everyone of our people realises that it is up to them to improve our living conditions through hard work and dedication rather than expecting others to help. The Japanese example after World War II is the best example of a national appreciation of the fact that hard work pays off and it is folly to hope someone would come along with miracles to change things overnight.

— That our elected representatives realise that the fate of the people who elected them lies in their hands and seek changes that contribute to national progress and the welfare of people. Important in such an approach is a realisation that they have a responsibility to look at things in a broader perspective and appreciate that changing social and cultural behaviour of people does not fall under democratic reforms. Lifestyles are individual choices and the people's representatives should not seek to bring about imposed solutions in our daily lives. It should be left to individuals to sense what is best for them in their social and cultural life and exercise their own options and restraints as they find fit rather than Parliament dictate to them how they should live and behave.

— That the New Year brings peace and prosperity to all of us.

Happy New Year to all.

Jordan and peace process — rules have changed

(Continued from page 1)

was particularly concerned with implications related to the presence of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees living in Jordan and the option of their return in their homeland in the context of a solution to the conflict. But Jordanian-Israeli and Jordanian-PLO contacts appeared to have helped allay such concerns, and contributed to holding the elections on time. The decline of the Islamic movement's clout in the 80-seat Parliament, after it lost seven of the 23 seats occupied in the previous legislature, strengthened the hand of supporters of the peace process in Jordan.

While Syria (together with Lebanon) said it would boycott the resumption of talks in Washington unless Israel declared its commitment to withdraw from the Golan Heights in line with U.N. Resolution 242, secret and public negotiations continued between Israel and the PLO.

Jordan, concerned that PLO-Israel talks may bypass Jordanian interests, set up six joint committees with the PLO with the aim of coordinating steps and defining future Jordanian-Palestinian relations. The Kingdom also declared in November that it could implement elements of a peace deal with Israel before signing a final agreement.

In a series of interviews following the Israel-PLO accord, King Hussein renewed Jordan's commitment

to a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli problem, but said that "we are going ahead regarding the details of the Jordanian-Israeli agenda and regarding all issues we have to prepare for and to deal with." He said Jordan saw no reason why it cannot reach agreements with a host of bilateral issues, with Israel as they negotiated a final comprehensive Middle East peace deal.

On Oct. 1, Crown Prince Hassan met with Mr. Peres at the White House at the invitation of U.S. President Bill Clinton. An agreement was reached to set up a trilateral Jordanian-Israeli-American committee to tackle economic cooperation. Within two months, Jordan initiated an agreement with Israel in Washington allowing Jordanian banks to reopen branches in the West Bank closed after the 1987 war. These developments followed unconfirmed reports that King Hussein had met secretly with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Mr. Peres several times between September and November. The renewed meetings were given priority over when the King left and a press conference in Amman that such meetings took place.

But more important of the Jordanian commitment on reopening Jordanian banks in the West Bank was delayed until after the signing of the implementation of Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip and Jericho in line with the Sept. 13 accord, differences in interpretation of its provisions.

Mr. Arafat also requested Jordan to delay the implementation of the agreement on reopening banks until after the implementation of the Israel-PLO accord.

This, combined with a PLO ambivalence to coordination with Jordan, including the suspension of joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee meetings, as procrastination over signing an economic cooperation accord, clouded the atmosphere and heightened tension between Jordan and the PLO.

The deterioration reached a peak when a Jordanian official was quoted as warning that if the PLO continued to ignore the need for coordination with Jordan, the Kingdom may adopt bilateral measures with Israel to open the Prince Mohammad Bridge linking Jordan with the West Bank city of Nablus or open a new crossing from Aqaba. This would have rendered futile PLO-Israel talks on crossing from Jericho to Jordan since the new crossings were outside the realm of Palestinian self-rule.

The official also referred to Parliament's decision last Sunday to keep Jerusalem as one of the governorates where Jordan could open an appeals court, describing the move as "a symbolic rejection of the disengagement decision" of July 1, 1988.

Mr. Arafat flew to Jordan on Thursday. His talks with King Hussein ended with statements from both sides confirming the intention of resuming coordination. Mr. Arafat was quoted by the

Palestinian news agency, Wafa, as saying that joint committees would resume meetings in Amman within a week.

While Syria and Lebanon have boycotted the multi-lateral talks, Jordan — and the PLO — attended all committee meetings on arms control, the environment, water, refugees and economic cooperation.

Jordan and Israel, under the chairmanship of Japan who heads the environment committee, reached their first concrete agreement on environment control for the Gulf of Aqaba. The two agreed to share equipment for monitoring the ecology of the Gulf of Aqaba.

Jordan sees an enormous economic potential in the implementation of full peace in the region. Megaprojects like the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal and water channelling from Turkey can only benefit the Kingdom.

The events of 1993 will most certainly spill over to 1994. The peace process and its implications, the continued Jordanian efforts to normalise ties with estranged Gulf Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia and the expected lifting of the economic embargo against Iraq are key factors to influence Jordan in the coming year. Prospects of a comprehensive peace, however, appear to be a long way ahead, with unholy expectations of a comprehensive settlement until after the conclusion of negotiations on the final status of both the land and people of Palestine.

Sept. 13 accord — euphoria is over

(Continued from page 1)

The alternative, Palestinian officials argue, could be that the Palestinians will find themselves lagging behind while Israel will try to push progress on other tracks.

Thus while the declaration of principles marked the emergence of a separate Israeli-Palestinian course, the deadlock reached by the end of 1993 is likely to reestablish a linkage between all the Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks.

Furthermore, the latest round of the talks, held in Cairo last week, revealed that the conceptual gap between the Palestinians and Israelis remains as wide as ever.

That Israel and the PLO had signed the accord did not alter either side's perception of the nature of the transition period. While Israel has been pushing forward proposals to limit Palestinian powers and practically keep all matters open — including the issue of settling the West Bank — the PLO has been more cautious, reluctant to let the Israeli-Palestinian accord open the door to Israeli demands.

As for the role of the accord, it is clear that the signing of the accord did not alter either side's perception of the nature of the transition period. While Israel has been pushing forward proposals to limit Palestinian powers and practically keep all matters open — including the issue of settling the West Bank — the PLO has been more cautious, reluctant to let the Israeli-Palestinian accord open the door to Israeli demands.

But in reflecting on the accord, it seems to be a no option at all from the PLO leadership's view, shifting the focus of negotiations to the power and interests of the autonomy authorities and international laws to

prevent Israel from using the postponement of negotiations on settlements to consolidate Israeli control and expropriation of land appear to be possible alternative negotiating tactics.

Some Palestinian officials, however, argue that the best negotiating strategy possible could help in the medium term, to minimise the damages and not necessarily to effect a drastic shift in the Palestinian standing vis-a-vis the Israelis.

Taking into consideration the alarmingly rapid erosion of Palestinian unity and disintegration of Palestinian institutions, even the optimists in the PLO are alarmed by prospects of what could be a national catastrophe for the Palestinian people.

The first week of 1994 will be very indicative of the direction the PLO leadership, particularly Yasser Arafat, will steer the political course, especially regarding broader representation and the building of democratic Palestinian institutions. The leadership will meet this week to discuss reforms and chart out a clearer strategy.

PLO tables compromise proposals

(Continued from page 1)

ter proposal flatly rejects it. The city of Jericho, according to the Israeli proposal, will be connected with Ouja through a special narrow strip leaving all of the land around Jericho to the King Hussein Bridge, under Israeli control, while Palestinians will only administer the religious sites in Al-Nabi Musa.

By confining Israeli control within the boundaries of the settlements in the Gaza Strip, the PLO hopes to thwart Israeli attempts to connect the settlements in one "security zone." But some PLO officials should not concede to Israeli demands to control land within the settlements' boundaries.

"The land within the settlements' boundaries are controlled by Israel any way against our will," said one PLO official. "The settlements are illegal and we should continue to deal with them through the negotiations as such."

LETTERS

Education vs. unconstitutional edicts

To the Editor:

I have been following the debate on the proposed law to ban Muslims from selling or producing alcohol in Jordan. Yet it is rather hard to understand how it is that while our illustrious law-makers have rightly spent so much time examining Islam's Holy Book, the Koran, apparently none of them seems to have paid much attention to democracy's holy book, the Jordanian Constitution. Article six, paragraph two of our Constitution states that:

"Jordanians shall be equal before the Law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards their rights and duties, on grounds of race, language or religion."

It is clear and unambiguous that any law that allows Christians to be employed one way and bans Muslims from the same occupation directly violates this article and discriminates against Muslims. There may well be good arguments for why this provision should be set aside, but none of the members of Parliament have made that case. This is particularly odd considering that those deputies most strongly in favour of the proposed law are often those quickest to accuse the government of violating the Constitution whenever it is in the interest of those members to do so.

Notwithstanding this serious oversight, there are wider issues here. In a time of democratisation and assumption of personal responsibility, it is anachronistic for Parliament to be seeking to impose morals and values on people by force and compulsion. It is indeed ironic that the Islamic Action Front deputies who are pushing for the ban have so little faith in the strength of our religion that they want to use the coercive apparatus of the state to advance their cause.

Experience in countries as far apart as the United States and Saudi Arabia has shown that banning alcohol, even partially, simply forces its use and abuse underground. Moreover, it increases the profit margins for criminals and smugglers and facilitates organised crime. The money from alcohol taxes which would have gone to the treasury, instead lines the pockets of gangsters. We should not close our eyes to these facts.

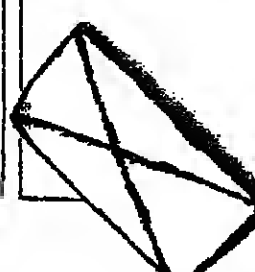
There are better ways to deal with the problem of alcohol. Parliament might, for instance, use its time to examine ways to educate people about the dangers and disadvantages of alcohol. Parliament could also insist that part of the revenues from alcohol taxes be used for such programmes.

What is perhaps more disturbing than the positions taken by some of the strongest proponents of the law is that taken by supposed "moderates". Those are the deputies who, merely for fear of being branded "un-Islamic", are likely to support the law. They should pay heed to another sin forbidden by the Holy Koran: hypocrisy.

By failing to debate the full implications of the law, Parliament is betraying the trust placed in it when it was elected. In these enlightened times, our deputies should spend less time thinking up new ways to bully the public. They ought to apply more effort to monitoring the performance of the government and finding solutions to our real problems: poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and ill-health. Alcohol is certainly a relevant social issue, and is indeed banned in Islam, but it should be addressed through education, not through unconstitutional edicts.

Muslims have a right, and indeed a duty, to do their best to increase understanding of the ideals of Islam. They should not imagine, however, that this must be done through intolerance and a lack of respect for the intelligence and views of their fellow citizens. Tolerance, wisdom, persuasion and debate are, well-known features of the faith. Those who seek to stifle argument, even on such sensitive matters, and impose change by compulsion, are truly deviating from the right course of Islam.

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Majali Cabinet seen capable of delivering on its promises

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played an instrumental role in delaying the signing of an Israeli-Jordanian agenda until progress was registered on the Palestinian-Israeli track of negotiations.

This cautious attitude towards developments in Arab-Israeli negotiations allowed most opponents of the peace process, especially the Islamists, to dilute their public criticism of the process since they did not fear that an agreement was imminent.

The Sharif Zeid government, with its low-key backdoor policy of containing the strong Islamist forces in the Lower House, was able to concentrate more on issues such as administrative reform and gaining acceptance of a number of stringent economic adjustment policies, including the raising of fuel and bread prices.

In May 1993, the appointment of Dr. Majali as head of a government that was entrusted with amending the Election Law put an end to what until that time appeared to be a smooth countdown to the first multi-party national elections expected within the last three months of 1993. The 11th Parliament had held its last session in March and there was no move to convene an extraordinary session either.

Dr. Majali, who formed his cabinet without consultation with the country's right-wing Islamists or nationalist leftists, set the ground for a headlong confrontation with the legislative authority which felt threatened by the unexpected challenge posed to it by a government that largely appeared to ignore its presence.

Although the issues that needed to be handled by the Sharif Zeid and Majali governments were in essence the same — the peace process, the economic adjustment programme and national stability — the style of the two premiers split the year into two distinct halves, each very much different from the other.

The first reaction to the appointment of Dr. Majali was fear that the executive authority would revert to trying to dominate its legislative counterpart and minimise its role.

This opinion gained ground when the cabinet of Dr. Majali was named and it became apparent that its members were largely "autocrats" who were expected to pay scant attention to the political reverberations of their executive decisions.

Opposition to Dr. Majali's government had become vocal even before it had announced what later became some of the most controversial decisions in the Kingdom's four years of democratisation.

When news of an impending move to dissolve Parliament and introduce an amendment to block voting in elections became common knowledge, political parties, which until then were pacified by promises of a public debate, raised the level of their opposition.

The Dr. Majali government appeared to have gained the upper hand over the legislative authority, and, by extension, the country's newly-licensed political parties, until the Nov. 8 national elections.

Parallel to a growing public fear about what the parties called hegemony of the ex-

ecutive authority, Jordanians were also edgy about the government's handling of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

Statements by government officials indicating that the PLO and Jordan had reached agreement on the "principle" that there should be no "duplication" in voting for Jordanians of Palestinian origin were received as an indication that Jordanians of Palestinian origin would be asked to make an immediate choice on citizenship.

Although Dr. Majali rejected that the government was contemplating any such measure, speculation did not end until His Majesty King Hussein made a statement on Oct. 12 in which he said that the elections would not have bearing on the rights of Jordanian voters of Palestinian origin who, he said, "will be able to choose what they please when the choice of return or compensation or both becomes available to them."

The absence of an active Parliament in the first five months of Premier Majali's term in office only contributed to generating a feeling that the executive authority was staging a comeback as the foremost authority in the country. To many analysts it meant a possible return to pre-democracy martial law form of government.

On Nov. 8, a new Lower House was elected. While the results indicated an ebb for the Islamists and renewed strength for traditionalist independent tribalists, the new House wanted to assert itself as a parallel force to the executive authority and not its subordinate.

Balance was restored to the relationship between the legislative and executive authorities during the vote of confidence session earlier this month. After a gruelling three days of criticism from the newly-elected deputies, Dr. Majali took the podium and in his speech accepted Parliament as an equal authority.

What he promised in his reply speech, coupled with the government policy statement read out by King Hussein as a Speech from the Throne earlier, cohered the tasks of his government in what appeared to be the first time that his government was to gain acceptance from the body politics as represented in the House.

Despite the low vote of confidence, Dr. Majali's government was starting to gain approval for its declared policy of pushing ahead with the Middle East peace process and its undeclared policy of containing the Islamist influence in the country.

By the last days of 1993, the government of Dr. Majali was able to win to its side some dissident deputies and politicians by promising that the real test of its credibility will be in the days and weeks to come.

This credibility, officials and observers maintain, will largely depend on the government's ability to institutionalise legislation that would protect the path of democracy in the country and improve the living standards of citizens.

The record of Dr. Majali, who over decades headed successful institutions in the country, had lent itself to many politicians to believe that he will be able to deliver on his promises.

12th Parliament fastens belts for effective four-year term

(Continued from page 1)

such dialogue took place before it dissolved Parliament on Aug. 4 and unilaterally changed the law 13 days later.

Deputies and political parties reacted with anger. They said the national dialogue never occurred, and the dissolution of Parliament was a preemptive move that provides a legal cover for changing the election law through a temporary legislation. That, some described as undemocratic and others labelled unconstitutional.

The Muslim Brotherhood, now politically active under the umbrella of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), threatened to boycott the elections and other parties said they would take the government to court.

The IAF said it was targeted by the new electoral rules which observers said would weaken the Islamists and other organised political parties to the advantage of tribal figures and traditional politicians.

Opponents of the change also said the temporary election law which replaced the bloc-voting system with the one-person, one-vote formula was incomplete. While many of them agreed the old

election law needed to be amended, they argued the change should have included a redistribution of parliamentary seats and a redrawing of electoral constituencies.

But the government paid little attention to these arguments and its opponents fell short of carrying out their threats. The government was not sued and no one boycotted the polls when they took place on Nov. 8.

Opposition parties challenged the government again when it said it might postpone the polls in light of the demographic and political challenges brought about by the signing of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel Gaza-Jericho first accord on Sept. 13.

Amidst the initial euphoria over the historic agreement there were fears and uncertainty about the implications of the agreement for Jordan.

Less than two weeks after the agreement was signed, the government floated the idea of putting the polls off until after the future of Palestinian refugees in Jordan was cleared. Some political parties and figures said the argument for postponing the polls was sound as others said such a move would constitute a setback to democracy in Jordan.

The uncertainty was cleared when the government announced on Sept. 30 that polling centres would open on Nov. 8 and urged people to register for voting.

Over 60 per cent of the 950,000 voters who collected their voting cards from the 1.5 million registered voters turned out at the polls to elect 80 deputies from among 550 contenders.

The results of the polls, which were preceded by a lacklustre election campaign, were close to the outcome expected from the introduction of the one-person, one vote formula.

Traditional and tribal figures fared well in the elections, which saw the parliamentary representation of the IAF reduced from 23 to 16 and 10 supporters from 10 to five.

While some expected the 12th Parliament to be docile, others said the government will have to work hard before it can win its confidence, arguing that only a change of priorities would occur. They said that while the majority of lawmakers would not challenge the government on its participation in the Arab-Israeli peace process and the premise of its economic policy, they would press it hard on bread and butter issues that dominated the election campaigns. The latter proved

closer to the truth.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali won a vote of confidence from the House on Dec. 8. But his humble victory, with 41 votes in favour, 29 against and nine abstentions, came after four difficult days during which many of the 73 deputies who took the floor castigated his cabinet for its alleged undemocratic actions and autocratic style of government.

Deputies sought to reassert the power of the legislature. The executive understood the message.

In a speech that lasted for over two hours before the vote of confidence was taken, Dr. Majali pledged a healthy and cooperative legislative-executive relationship.

Dr. Majali promised respect for the role of the House. The deputies accepted the promise but warned they would be watching to see the pledge fulfilled.

The uncertainty about the future of parliamentary life that 1993 at one point held will make it a year to remember, but so will other positive landmarks.

Not only did 1993 see the holding of the first multi-party elections in over three decades, it also witnessed the election of the first woman deputy in the history of the Kingdom.

Jordan and PLO to revitalise coordination

(Continued from page 1)

according to officials, concluded that lack of coordination is adversely affecting each side's negotiating stands with Israel.

Thursday's surprise visit by Mr. Arafat was partly triggered by the founding of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations over control over crossing

points.

PLO officials said that Israel had repeatedly used Jordan as a pretext to refuse Palestinian control over the crossings. Israeli claims that Jordan opposed Palestinian control over the bridges had prompted Jordan to send official messages to Mr. Arafat affirming support for the Palestinian stand.

Both sides, particularly the PLO, have realised that Israel was trying to pit them against each other, exploiting the absence of coordination," said a well-informed analyst.

Although a Jordanian-Palestinian draft economic agreement was not discussed, according to well-placed sources, any differences over the pact were expected to be

tackled as soon as the two sides will engage in thorough discussions about all aspects of the relationship.

It was not clear if the Palestinians will ask for modifications on the draft agreement, but the PLO leadership was expected to formulate working papers to bring to a meeting for the joint Jordanian-Palestinian coordination committee.

Jordan has confidence in economic goals

(Continued from page 1)

the number of new local products appearing in the market evidences a trend to manufacture consumer goods to meet local demands; a healthy sign, experts say, except for what appears to be a tendency to imitate successful businesses while the market scope remains limited.

The government, long a target of criticism that red tape and bureaucracy are discouraging foreign investors, is implementing a new law on incentives to encourage fresh investments, but complaints have been heard that it is not doing enough abroad to solicit investors with a proper presentation of the incentives and facilities it offers.

A briefing by Finance Minister Sami Gammoh to Parliament members last week served as one of the best guides to the Kingdom's economic status. Among other things, the finance minister told deputies that: — The government intends to maintain a level of 23 per cent of the GDP in investment and increase savings to 11 per cent by 1998. — The present policy of leaving to market forces to

determine commercial bank interest rates will be maintained.

— The foreign exchange grid system will be maintained, with more flexibility afforded to exchangers and banks to determine the exchange rate of the dinar while ensuring the stability of the currency. This implied close monitoring of the market and Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) intervention whenever necessary to correct what the government feels as instable factors.

Mr. Gammoh also explained how the IMF programme helped Jordan to reschedule its debts and gain access to World Bank loans and multinational aid to help develop local sectors, which in turn could contribute to addressing inefficiencies and below-optimum utilisation of resources.

According to the minister, the Kingdom's commitment to the IMF programme is a result of an awareness of the need to correct the economy through sound and efficient means inasmuch as the inevitability of having to implement the measures demanded by the international watchdog.

The country's national debts, which stood at \$8.3 billion at the end of 1989, have been brought down to \$6.88 billion, partly by cancelling non-disbursed credit facilities and partly by direct addressing debts by settling it or buy-back at discounted value.

In addition, several countries have offered partial write-off of Jordan's debts. But the total amount covered under the write-offs represents only a tiny fraction of the overall debt.

The United States holds about \$950 million of Jordan's debts, followed by France and Japan with about \$900 million each.

The former Soviet Union was another major debtor, account for about \$750 million, but Jordan has reached an agreement under which part of the debts are being settled in cash and the other in goods.

The Kingdom has appealed for debt relief, but international experts doubt whether outright write-off would be extended. They say creditors might opt for other forms of relief such as conversion of debts into investments and holdings in dinars.

1993 — a significant year in Jordan's history

(Continued from page 1)

tres, sports clubs and swimming pools.

— The Progress and Justice Party and Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party are licensed.

February: 1: Snowstorms hit the country.

2: Bread prices goes up by 10 fils.

5: Abu Shakoush bits again.

8: King Hussein forms committee to prepare the Centre Study of Freedom, Democracy, and Human Rights in the Arab World.

9: The Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party is licensed — Jordan, Kazakhstan establish diplomatic ties.

10: The Freedom Party, is licensed.

12: Bakers say they will protest increase in the price of government-subsidised flour.

21: The Royal Court announces the engagement of Prince Abdullah to Rania Faisal Yassin.

23: The Press and Publication Law passes through senate after heated debate.

26: Police announce the arrest of three suspects in three attacks on shops in Amman and say Abu Shakoush did not exist.

March: 1: The House endorses a teacher union law.

2: The Society for combating Zionism and Racism is launched.

7: World Trade Centre suspect's father says son totally innocent; Jordanians condemn New York blast.

10: Islamists defeated in bid to segregate children at schools.

— Bakers, government reach compromise.

17: Government raises public sector salaries.

— The House endorses government move to collect arms.

22: Islamist deputies launch campaign to ban alcohol in Jordan.

31: The House holds last session of regular term.

ter four-month delay.

— King Hussein inaugurates the launching of JTV Satellite channel.

May: 2: Jordan marks 40th anniversary of the King's assumption of his constitutional powers with nationwide festivities.

9: Government freezes all moves towards introducing the controversial sales tax.

21: Hezb Al Tahrir members arrested.

22: The King tells media chiefs to be alert against "enemies of democracy."

29: Abdul Salam Majali forms government.

June: 9: The King says changes to Election Law only through dialogue.

10: Prince Abdullah weds Rania Yassin.

16: Prince Hassan attends Vienna conference on human rights.

18: The King, Clinton meet at White House.

— 200 Bosnian refugees arrive in Jordan.

20: Second group of 250 Bosnians arrives.

21: Syrian authorities release Hassan Al Kharib after being 22 years in detention; Majali Nasraween was released a week before after 23 years in prison.

22: Foot-smelling, insect-infested Pepsi pool dredging begins.

23: Jordan and Israel reach accord on draft agenda.

29: National strategy for women adopted.

July: 5: The King, Senators debate election law on television.

12: Six Jordanian-Palestinian committees formed.

14: Majali denies Jordan has any political detainees.

16: Jordan gets debt extension in negotiations with Paris Club.

— The 20th political party, the Jordanian Arab Democratic Party, gets licence.

17: Mamdouh Abbadi replaces Mohammad Bashir as mayor of Greater Amman.

19: Jordan bans Bulgarian meat imports.

21: The Ministry of Health issues anti-smoking advisory.

25: Deputies opposed to peace talks seek to step up campaign.

28: Prince Hassan urges women to assume active role.

31: Jerash's 12th annual festival of arts and culture closes.

August: 4: Parliament dissolved.

polls set for Nov. 8.

9: Parties, politicians condemn dissolving of Parliament, call for keeping election law unamended.

13: Maan Abu Nowar proposes press code of honour for journalists.

17: Four executions in Jordan draw little reaction from rights activists.

— King endorses a temporary amendment to Election Law introducing a one-person, one-vote system; opponents say they will contest temporary legislation in court.

22: Journalists oppose press code of conduct.

22-27: Heat wave hits country.

26: IAF decides to take part in elections.

28: Independent Islamist Leith Shbeilat quits politics.

31: Israeli cabinet approves accord with PLO.

September: 1: Palestinian refugees in Amman split over Gaza-Jericho accord — first cases of typhoid reported in Ajloun.

3: The King signals completion of disengagement process with Palestinians.

7: Jordan, Lebanon and Syria agree to joint plan to promote tourism.

8: Prince Hassan reaffirms support for independent Palestinian decision.

9: Trial of ten suspects accused of conspiring to assassinate the King opens at the State Security Court.

10: The PLO, Israel formalise mutual recognition.

12: Prominent writer and poet Abdul Rahim Omar dies.

— Radi Hassan Innab, Jordan's first army chief, dies at 98.

13: The PLO, Israel sign agenda.

17: Jordan, and the PLO form joint higher committee.

18: The government launches 1993-1997 economic and social plan which envisages JD5 billion overall investment.

19: The King backs government ban on officials writing in newspapers without permission.

20: Jordan pledges help to implement Israel-PLO accord.

— The King, Arafat chan Jordanian-Palestinian coordination.

22: Refugees cannot vote in Jordan and occupied lands, says cabinet minister.

25: The CBJ says Jordanian dinar to remain in circulation in occupied lands.

26: Journalist Ramadan Rawashdeh detained on charges of slandering State

Security Court in his coverage of the Muta University trial.

Jordan will not accept Palestinian refugees from Syria and Lebanon.

28: 19 Bosnians return home after medical treatment.

— Majali announces elections to be held as scheduled.

30: Al Ahali chief editor Jamil Nimri charged with slander.

October: 1: Prince Hassan meets Peres; tripartite group announced.

9: Government decides to exempt up to 70 per cent of exporters net profits from income tax.

9: Jordan rejects Israeli ruling on Haram Al Sharif.

10: The minister of education denies reports of U.S. request to alter anti-Israeli references in school textbooks.

15: Sharif Zeid appointed Royal Court Chief; Khaled Karaki to head Al Bait Foundation; Yanal Hikmat becomes King advisor; Mohammad Udwan takes over tourism.

16: 599, including three women, to contest elections.

24: Islamists charge they are being victimised by government.

25: The King meets U.S. Jewish team, calls for comprehensive peace.

28: The Higher Court of Justice reverses Ministry of Interior ban on public rallies.

29: Officer and three gunmen killed in shootout near Karamah.

November: 1: Majali says unemployment declined.

4: Italian firm wins bid for construction of Karamah Dam.

6: Germany to reschedule JD41 million of Jordan's debt.

— Government endorses national strategy for women.

7: The Queen says transformations in Mideast will be influenced by nature, quality of women's participation in society.

— Police indict IAF leader Hammam Sa'ed on kidnapping, assault charges.

8: Jordanians elect 12th Parliament.

9: The King welcomes results of elections.

— Historical victory for women; Toujan Faisal wins seat in Parliament.

15: New tax levied on freight charges on exports.

17: Four parties form the Jordanian National Front alliance.

18: King names Senate

members.

19: Three parliamentary blocs take shape.

20: Royal decrees appoint former senators Mohammad Rasoul Kilani and Marwan Qasem as advisors.

22: King opens 12th Parliament.

23: 50 political activists contest election results.

— Masri elected House speaker.

24: Officials deny Israeli reports of aviation agreement.

— The King pays first official visit to Egypt since 1990.

24: Officials confirm that Jordanian businessmen visited Israel but say government was not involved in the discussions.

27: Finance Minister Sami Gammoh unveils a JD1.487 billion "no-deficit" budget for 1994.

28: Toujan Faisal warns press against improper coverage.

— Industry and Trade Minister Bassam Saket announces licences no longer required for all exports and imports.

December: 1: Majali reshuffles Cabinet.

— Rima Khalaf, first woman minister in nine years.

— Jordan, Israel sign memorandum of understanding on reopening Jordanian banks in the occupied West Bank.

5: Vote of confidence debate begins.

— Deputies assail government over its conduct of elections.

8: The government wins vote of confidence.

10: More than 300 people injured in Safeway fire.

12: The government submits 1994 budget proposal to Parliament.

14: Government sends draft legislation on alcohol to Parliament.

19: The CBJ says reopening of banks is unrelated to Jordanian-Palestinian accord.

19: Jordan is planning to apply for GATT membership.

22: A rift between hawks and doves within the IAF worsens.

22-23: The government decides to cut customs duties pick-up trucks.

26: IAF Majlis Al Shura elected; first woman, Nawal Faouri, 37, a school principal wins.

Asian stocks end '93 on a raging bull run

HONG KONG (R) — Asian stocks ended the year of the raging bull market by setting a clutch of new record highs Friday and brokers said they expect more records to fall in the new year.

The dollar, meanwhile, ended a very quiet day little changed in trade dominated by year-end position adjustments in the absence of Tokyo dealers, brokers said.

It closed at 1.7340/50 marks after holding within a 10-point range from its opening 1.7348/53 level. The dollar firmed slightly against the yen to close at 111.80/90 level from its 111.80/90 opening level.

Taiwan's vibrant stock market set the pace surging 257.11 points to a 31-month high of 2,425.68, representing an 80 per cent gain on the year.

"Some people took profits (in the morning) but then they saw how strong the market was and rushed to buy again," said

Ben Chen of Barings in Taipei. "But by that time there were almost no stocks available any more."

The Tokyo, Seoul, Manila, Bangkok and Jakarta stock markets were closed for the new year holidays.

Last minute bargain-hunting in Hong Kong erased an early 248.41 loss to send the Hang Seng index to yet another all-time high of 11,888.39, a gain of 10.92 points on the day and 115.67 per cent advance on the year.

Brokers said they suspected a touch of window-dressing in late afternoon trade to ensure the Hang Seng ended the year in positive territory after morning profit-taking.

"After the new year the market is going higher," said Ivan Leung of PBI Securities in Hong Kong.

Brokers said speculators regarded the presence of three eights in the Hang Seng's close as auspicious.

"Eight" in the Cantonese dialect spoken in Hong Kong is a homonym for prosperity.

Kuala Lumpur and Sydney proved no exception to the trend, climbing 43.59 points to a record 1,275.32 high and 19.1 points to a post-1987 crash high of 2,173.60 respectively.

Singapore also gained but was an exception in breaking no records en route to its 35.07 gain to its 2,425.68 close, just off a new high.

"We have seen a remarkable year and have been overwhelmed by good things," a Vickers Ballas dealing director said.

The holiday spirit spilled over into the energy market with spot prices holding steady in quiet Asian trade, dampened by the absence of Tokyo traders.

February Brent was well bid at \$13.20 while February NYMEX light crude was bid around Thursday's settlement of \$14.17.

Israeli parliament approves '94 budget

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's parliament approved Friday a 126.5 billion shekel (\$42.2 billion) state budget for 1994 after week-long deliberations. The vote was 62-44.

The budget was passed after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered rebellious members of his Labour Party not to pursue large increases in welfare expenditures.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said the budget did not include expenses for the implementation of Israel's accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for limited Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The matter of the expenses of implementing our accord with the PLO is not in the budget," Mr. Shohat told Israel radio. "These will be hundreds of thousands of shekels for redeployment of the army and other security forces and security arrangements for Jewish settlements."

Defence, which accounted for 18.2 billion shekels (6.59 billion) in the 1993 operating budget, remains the largest item at 20.24 billion shekels (\$6.75 billion).

The budget contains provisions that for the first time will bring child allowance payments to Israeli Arab families up to par with those made to Jews.

The budget allocates \$330 million to finalise the restructuring of the ailing, state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries.

The deficit, which by law will be phased out over the coming years, is projected at 3.0 per cent of gross domestic product in 1994 compared to the 1993 projection of 3.2 per cent.

Gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 3.5 per cent, a lower rise than in the past two years due largely to a drop in public sector housing construction, according to official figures released this week. In 1992, GDP rose by 6.6 per cent and in 1991, by 6.2 per cent.

Unemployment in 1993 was an average of 10.4 per cent, compared with 11.2 per cent in 1992, and was expected to fall.

EEA knocks out NAFTA as world's biggest single market

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Economic Area (EEA), which from midnight linked the European Community (EC) and EFTA in a giant trading zone, outstrips the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) as the world's biggest single market.

While NAFTA, a free trade zone linking the United States, Canada and Mexico, is far bigger than EEA in terms of territory, the EEA is bigger in terms of population, scope, gross domestic product and share of world trade.

"Although the Americans claim that NAFTA is bigger, that's not true. We are bigger from many points of view. It is the world's biggest single market and as such has tremendous importance."

EFTA Secretary General George Reisch told Reuters. While NAFTA is almost five times bigger than the EEA in terms of territory, the EEA will have 372 million consumers, against 360 million in NAFTA.

The EEA's GDP stands at

\$7,501 billion against \$6,770 billion in NAFTA and the EEA exports \$3,878 billion annually per person against only \$1,685 for NAFTA, according to EFTA figures.

And the EEA, whose members overall send more than half of their exports to each other, will cover \$1,579 billion in imports and \$1,615 billion in exports against only \$715 billion and \$624 billion respectively in NAFTA, according to the EFTA figures.

EFTA (European Free Trade Association) officials pointed out that the EEA also extends to trade in most services, unlike NAFTA which remains restricted to a single labour market.

The EEA is also bigger than ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, which has set a 15-year timetable for implementing its own trading zone AFTA (Asian Free Trade Area).

ASEAN groups Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

Indian bourse scourge to be replaced amid row

BOMBAY (R) — India's chief capital markets regulator said Friday he will be replaced soon, a move that is an apparent blow to reforming turbulent bourses and comes amid his unresolved row with Bombay's powerful stock brokers.

G.V. Ramakrishna, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), said he expects to go in mid-January.

Asked by Reuters about a local report he was to be shifted to the Planning Commission, he replied: "It is true. I may get my orders today or tomorrow."

The Planning Commission is regarded as a convenient siding into which officials can be shunted, political analysts said. Mr. Ramakrishna, feisty 63-year-old Harvard-trained bureaucrat and former diplomat, has been locked in battle with India's powerful stock broking community to clean up Indian bourses.

Asked if he was happy about being shifted from SEBI in the middle of a major controversy, Mr. Ramakrishna said: "I'll do what I have been assigned to do."

Brokers at four major Indian stock exchanges exactly a week ago ended a 10-day strike in protest against a SEBI ban on forward trading, imposed in a bid to curb what Mr. Ramakrishna had called excessive speculation.

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) index had reached a 1993 high of 3,454.81 on Dec. 13, up 32 per cent since the beginning of November, when the ban was imposed.

Foreign investors had largely welcomed Mr. Ramakrishna's attempts to clean up India's stock exchanges, Bombay, the largest, has a capitalisation of \$80 billion.

But Indian brokers saw Mr. Ramakrishna as too confrontational. "There needs to be a change in SEBI's working style," said Arun Chitkara, chief executive of Jamnadas Morarjee Co.

An analyst with India Securities Ltd said however Mr. Nadkarni was likely to continue the reform process.

Gold rises 17.4% in '93

LONDON (R) — After a roller-coaster ride in 1993, the gold price ended the year 17.4 per cent higher. Gold was fixed in London Friday at \$390.65 per ounce, down \$1.10 from the fresh five-month high set Thursday afternoon. Bullion began the year at \$329.40 before sliding to its lowest fix since January 1986 of \$326.10

in March. In between, prices rallied to their highest fix since Sept. 28, 1990 of \$406.70 on Aug. 2 in a market fuelled by record imports to China, falling interest rates world wide and the well-publicised entry of financier James Goldsmith and George Soros to the market place.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JANUARY 1, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Today's diverse aspects bring all sorts of unusual opportunities to remain alert at all times and bear in mind that it won't be business as usual. Engage in favourite hobby with congenials.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) It would be well to spend some time today meditating upon what you truly want out of life and how to get it. Step out social with key people tonight.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Close ties and friends appreciate your worth now and are willing to help or cooperate with you in every way so that you can advance.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be alert to the expectations of executives and see that you impress them with your ability and promptness. Be meticulous. And conscientious.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be alert to the many opportunities that are available to you and also raise your level of consciousness to greater things.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Talk over your ideas with authorities and you find they will cooperate with you and give needed backing. Also give much thought to what loved one desires. Be loyal as well.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Every opportunity is now yours to get together with associates and cooperate in such a way

that greater benefits are yours in the future.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) By working more harmoniously with associates and being cheerful, you make big headway today. Cover their good will. Be sure to improve health, appearance and clothing tonight.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This can be a very happy day for you since friends are grateful for your cheerful attitude and charming ways and gladly accompany you to fun places.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Close ties demand that you get busy with joint interests and rightfully so. Employ or buy gadgets that will be time and labour-saving.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are able to put new systems and gadgets into use now that will make your tasks easier. Sales more abundant, business or home running more efficient.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Finances are virtually important right now, so be sure you increase income appreciably so that you can also help others as you desire to do.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) While you are highly inspired how to go after your aims today, it would be wise to take a good friend along with you. Evening can also be very successful.

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 2, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Five Moon in Virgo trines to Venus, Mars, Mercury, Sun and Neptune and a sextile to Jupiter make this the best day of the month to launch a course of action that will prove satisfactory all year.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Ideal day for studying highest philosophies and most modern psychology so that you can be far more successful and happy in the future.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be sure you get out to the services of your choice in the early morning. Then decide what you want most to do and what is most desirable.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be sure you get out to the services of your choice in the early morning. Then decide what you want most to do and what is most desirable.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Silent meditation is best this morning if you are to get your life planned on a more secure and spiritual basis for ultimate happiness.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You must be explicit with comrades if you want to get them to cooperate with you and be of real assistance for projects in mind for success.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) By really living the Golden Rule now, you will make a fine impression upon higher-ups and they will lend a helping hand to get you where you want to be in the future.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) By studying your newspaper well, you will find a new method of operating that will fine to adapt for the future and become more successful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Take time today to figure out how better to systemise all of your affairs so that you know exactly where you are headed.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get together informally with partners today and be sure you make a good impression by living the Golden Rule so that you come to a far better understanding.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have every opportunity to help others who are in need today and store up blessings for yourself. Then be sure you get ahead in order.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This can be a wonderfully happy day and night for you, if you are attuned properly and live by the proper messages that you have before.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There are problems to be solved at home now, so be sure you view them objectively for best results. Then entertain at home in the evening and be perfectly happy, relaxed.

Study says Japanese car plants in U.S. cost jobs

WASHINGTON (R) — The growth of Japanese-owned car plants in the United States since 1982 has weakened the domestic car industry almost as much as imports and has cost 158,000 jobs, according to a private study.

The study by the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal research group, contradicts the views of some economists that the Japanese car "transplants" have helped revitalise the domestic industry by forcing it to be more competitive.

"Contrary to what some have claimed, Japanese investment in the U.S. auto industry is not a solution to our declining competitiveness in that sector," concluded the report, titled Japanese Auto Transplants and the U.S. Automobile Industry.

Even though Japanese transplants in the United States, like Honda, Nissan, Toyota and Mazda hire U.S. workers,

they have destroyed other American jobs by using a higher percentage of imported parts than big three carmakers General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, the report said.

"You can call a transplant half an import," said the report's author, Candace Howes, a University of Notre Dame economics professor and former car industry analyst for the United Auto Workers.

Dr. Howes, estimated that output of "transplanted" Japanese cars in the United States will rise to three million units a year by the middle 1990s on top of the two million imported units a year, which would be unchanged from 1982.

But since about half the parts in "transplanted" cars are imported, the three million cars made in Japanese-owned plants each year are the equivalent of another 1.5 million imports, which will have eliminated a net 158,000 job

opportunities and \$6 billion a year in income by the mid-1990s, Dr. Howes said.

Japanese car companies began assembling cars in the United States in the early 1980s in part because of voluntary agreements that limit car imports. More recently two German car makers, BMW and Mercedes-Benz, have announced plans to open plants in South Carolina and Alabama, respectively.

The report said transplanted foreign plants often get tax breaks from state governments and have other built-in advantages over the big three car makers. Because they are newer with a younger, more rural, less unionised workforce, their health, pension and wage costs are lower, it said.

Further, the report said Japanese companies mostly have not transferred more highly skilled design work of their American plants.

Hanoi boosts passes bankruptcy law

HANOI (R) — Vietnam's parliament, nailing in place more planks of its fledgling market economy, has boosted its 1994 growth target to eight per cent and passed a landmark bankruptcy law to start paring down the state sector.

The national assembly finished its three-week session with a vote to set next year's gross domestic product (GDP) growth target at eight per cent, the official Vietnam News said Friday, up from about 7.2 per cent for this year.

Industrial output value was targeted to grow by 11 per cent in 1994, while exports should grow by 20 per cent and inflation should remain under 10 per cent, the parliament projected Thursday.

Agricultural output, long the mainstay of the economy, was seen rising by four per cent next year to hit an output of 25 million tonnes of food in 1994, the newspaper said.

The centrepiece of the half-yearly parliament session was passage of the hotly-argued

bankruptcy bill, which will finally provide Vietnam with a legal framework to force state companies to sink or swim according to their market performance.

"The issuing of this law is very important and necessary," the assembly said in a statement published Friday. "(It) helps to push enterprises to make efficient business decisions and ensures social order and discipline."

Vietnam's socialist-style state sector, a relic of the days when Hanoi copied Soviet cen-

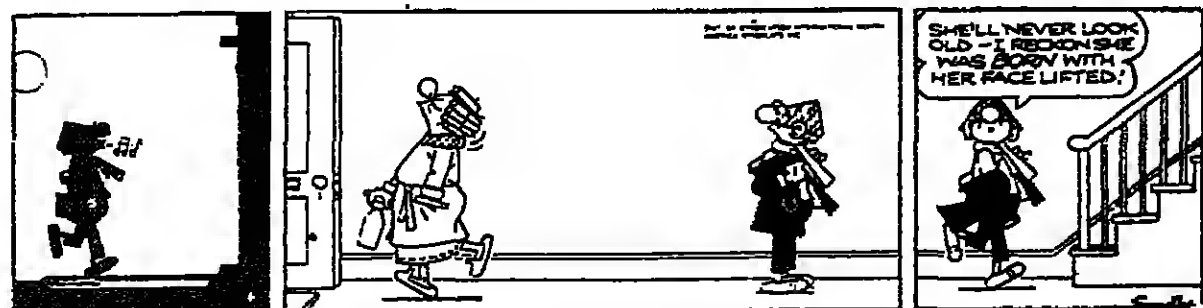
tral planning, has proved a brake on overall growth as poor accounting methods and the promise of endless government subsidies kept official managers placid.

While Vietnam's state sector is small compared to other former socialist countries — employing only six per cent of the national labour force compared with 77 per cent in Russia, for example — it covers key industries and accounts for some 25 per cent of overall GDP, according to the World Bank.

Peanuts



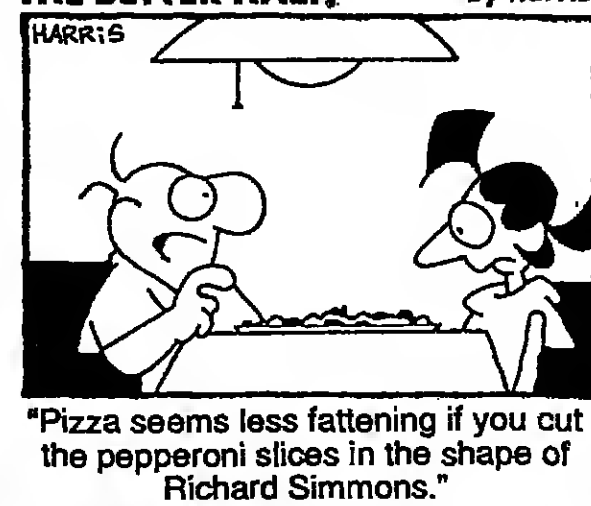
Andy Capp



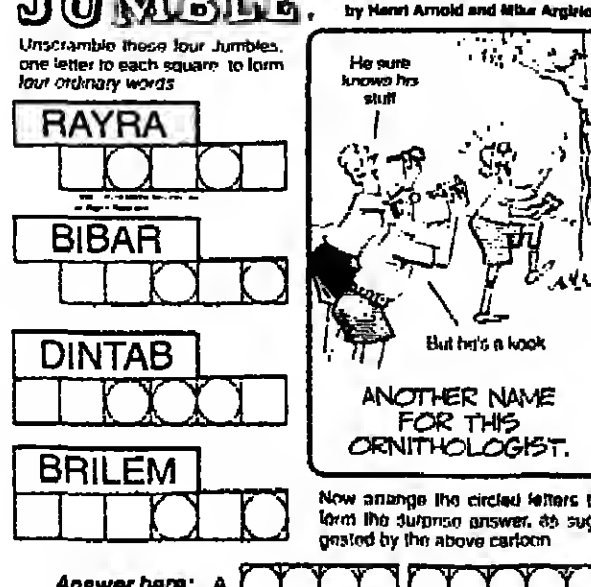
Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

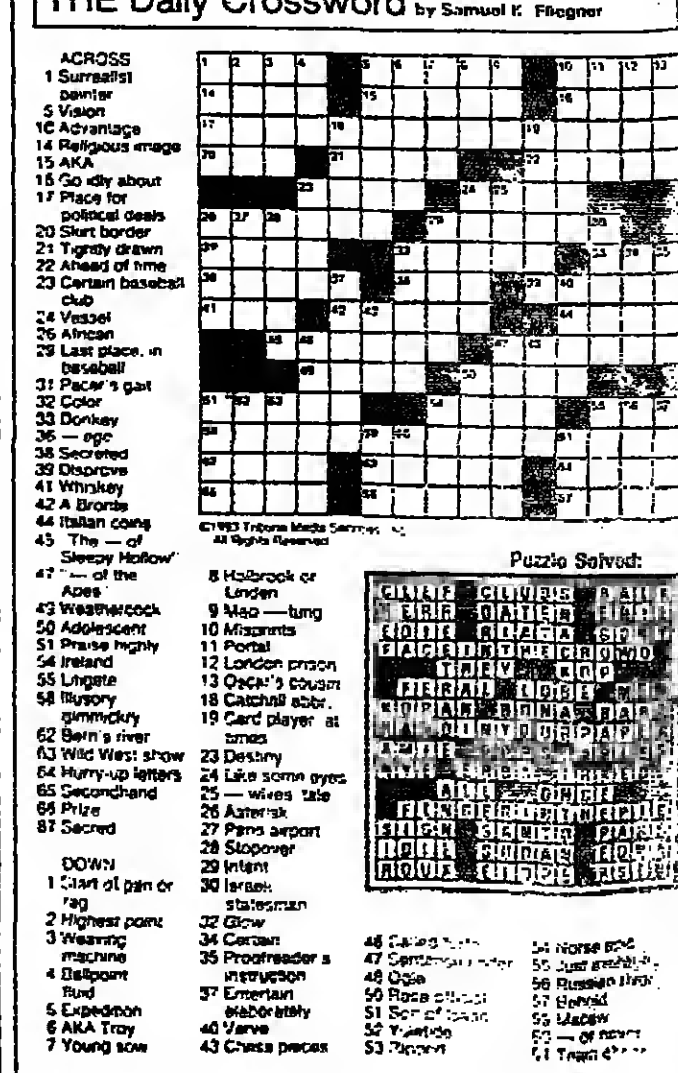


JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argleton



Answer here: A (Answers tomorrow)

THE Daily Crossword by Samuel K. Fogner



JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	323,818	184.599	184.500	184.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	380,748	4.150	4.150	4.200
AL-BANQA	388	34.700	34.700	34.700
Bank of Jordan	57,311	4.250	4.170	4.210
AL-BANQA	164,269	1.990	1.988	2.000
AL-BANQA	276,414	2.150	2.140	2.140
AL-BANQA	130,942	1.240	1.180	1.220
AL-BANQA	187,800	4.000	4.000	4.050
AL-BANQA	32,782	4.500	4.500	4.500
AL-BANQA	14,328	4.750	4.750	4.800
AL-BANQA	1,000	1.300	1.300	1.300
AL-BANQA	37,432	4.250	4.250	4.300
AL-BANQA	374,132	1.700	1.700	1.700
AL-BANQA	2,911	4.600	4.600	4.600
AL-BANQA	54,795	3.120	3.120	3.120
AL-BANQA	42,592	4.250	4.250	4.300
AL-BANQA	242,780	3.970	3.970	4.010
AL-BANQA	31,100	3.250	3.250	3.300
AL-BANQA	1,000	4.000	4.000	4.000
AL-BANQA	16,777	3.770	3.770	3.810
AL-BANQA	115,558	3.300	3.300	3.300
AL-BANQA	4,970	3.500	3.500	3.510
AL-BANQA	514,312	4.800	4.800	4.800
AL-BANQA	334,659	3.300	3.300	3.300
AL-BANQA	29,284	3.100	3.100	3.100
AL-BANQA	1,102	5.700	4.000	4.000
AL-BANQA	2,340	4.700	4.000	4.000
AL-BANQA	18,474	1.940	1.940	1.940
AL-BANQA	19,180	6.220	6.220	6.220
AL-BANQA	240,424	2.880	2.880	2.880
AL-BANQA	1,170	1.370	1.370	1.370
AL-BANQA	1,954	1.030	1.030	1.030
AL-BANQA	731	1.550	1.550	1.550
AL-BANQA	4,484	1.000	1.000	1.000
AL-BANQA	47,493	13.500	13.500	13.500
AL-BANQA	7,964	12.000	12.000	12.000
AL-BANQA	424,720	2.180	2.180	2.180
AL-BANQA	341,323	8.000	8.000	8.000
AL-BANQA	4,532	1.710	1.710	1.710
AL-BANQA	504,941	2.440	2.440	2.440
AL-BANQA	14,544	3.400	3.400	3.400
AL-BANQA	79,036	9.900	9.900	9.900
AL-BANQA	1,363	1.800	1.800	1.800
AL-BANQA	345	3.200	3.200	3.200
AL-BANQA	35,014	7.600	7.600	7.600
AL-BANQA	70,818	10.700	10.700	10.700
AL-BANQA	430,182	8.100	8.100	8.100
AL-BANQA	5,713	7.100	7.100	7.100
AL-BANQA	4,124	2.350	2.350	2.350
AL-BANQA	38,183	2.610	2.610	2.610
AL-BANQA	208,340	15.650	15.650	15.650
AL-BANQA	279,619	2.940	2.940	2.940
AL-BANQA	12,418	2.440	2.440	2.440
AL-BANQA	3,442	3.440	3.440	3.440
AL-BANQA	705,171	12.000	12.000	12.000
AL-BANQA	553,445	4.200	4.200	4.200
AL-BANQA	933,430	10.100	10.100	10.100
AL-BANQA	29,499	1.570	1.570	1.570
AL-BANQA	14,524	6.220	6.220	6.220
AL-BANQA	3,344	3.020	3.020	3.020
AL-BANQA	27,437	3.840	3.840	3.840
AL-BANQA	1,700	4.000	4.000	4.000
AL-BANQA	134,181	2.300	2.300	2.300
AL-BANQA	114,677	7.000	7.000	7.000
AL-BANQA	24,700	4.400	4.400	4.400
AL-BANQA	35,171	1.110	1.110	1.110
AL-BANQA	100,100	4.700	4.700	4.700
AL-BANQA	127,131	7.300	7.300	7.300
AL-BANQA	37,000	3.410	3.410	3.410
AL-BANQA	14,400	4.300	4.300	4.300
AL-BANQA	173,790	1.350	1.350	1.350
AL-BANQA	27,818	2.500	2.500	2.500
AL-BANQA	225,427	4.410	4.410	4.410
GRAND TOTAL	9,834,445			

Turkey seeking way to empty Iraqi oil pipeline

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's foreign minister said Friday that U.N. approval for emptying twin Iraqi-Turkish oil pipelines might be forthcoming, but no agreement had been reached yet on how to dispose of Iraq's share of the oil.

The U.N. Security Council seems to have no objection to the emptying of the pipeline, Hikmet Cetin told a news conference. "The issue is primarily what is to be done with Iraq's share of the crude oil that is going to be obtained after the emptying."

The twin 986-kilometres long pipelines link northern Iraq oilfields at Kirkuk to Turkey's Mediterranean terminal at Yumurtalik. The late president Turgut Ozal ordered their closure a few days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Turkey wants to drain, flush and refill the pipelines to prevent deterioration resulting from their long idleness. An Iraqi foreign ministry official is expected in Ankara early in January to discuss the issue, Mr. Cetin said.

Turkey says sanctions have cost it about \$600 million in pipeline fees since the oil artery was closed and billions of dollars more in lost trade and contracts with Iraq.

Around 5.7 million barrels of the estimated 9.2 million barrels of crude oil inside the pipelines belong to Iraq.

Mr. Cetin said Turkey would be free to use its share of the trapped oil, but the U.N. sanctions committee would have to approve any disposal of Iraqi-owned crude.

Mr. Cetin said Turkey would try harder to get sanctions lifted in 1994.

Russia says it is ready to cooperate on oil prices

MOSCOW (R) — Russia is ready to cooperate on stabilising oil prices and reached agreements at talks with Omani Oil Minister Said Bin Ahmad Al Shanfari this week, First Deputy Fuel and Energy Minister Anatoly Fomin said Friday.

He gave no indication, however, that Russia planned any special effort to cut output or export, as a result of the talks.

"Russia is very interested in stabilisation of prices and is ready to cooperate with all who share this goal," he told Reuters by telephone. Results should soon become evident, he added.

Mr. Fomin, who headed the Russian delegation at the talks Thursday, declined to give details of the meeting with the Omani Minister.

Mr. Shanfari has been visiting several non-OPEC oil producing countries to try to persuade them to join collective action to support the depressed market.

Both Britain and Norway have declined to give the Omani minister pledges of any measures to curb North Sea output. But Yemen, Egypt and Syria have said they would like to help.

"We discussed a number of questions and reached concrete agreements. Above all, we consider these talks to have been very positive... the agenda was confidential," Mr. Fomin said. "I would like to say that concrete results will become evident in the near future."

Crude output in Russia, the world's third biggest oil producer after the United States and Saudi Arabia, has been declining for the past five years due to financial problems.

A Russian fuel and energy ministry spokesman said Wednesday that he did not believe it was in Russia's interests to reduce output or exports of its main hard currency earner, "on the country," he said.

"Russia is not expecting any concrete decisions to be taken rapidly," Alexander Voronin, deputy minister in charge of foreign trade, said.

The question of whether Russia should reduce its crude exports will probably be tackled (at talks with Shanfari), though it is impossible for Russia to do so, he said.

Last month, Mr. Voronin said Russia had no plans to cut crude oil exports to support depressed world prices. "Crude exports are Russia's main foreign exchange earner," he said.

World oil prices dropped to five-year lows last month because of oversupply. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) wants other producers to help it defend prices.

Mr. Shanfari, who arrived in Moscow Wednesday, has proposed a meeting of producers outside OPEC to discuss how to restore stability to world oil prices.

Russian crude oil output is expected to decline anyway to about 327 million tonnes (6.54 million barrels per day) in 1994, compared with about 350 million tonnes (7.0 million b/d) in 1993.

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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 12/29/93	Tokyo Close 12/30/93
Sterling Pound	1.4770	1.4830
Deutsche Mark	1.7275	1.7348
Swiss Franc	1.4665	1.4645
French Franc	5.6555	5.6537**
Japanese Yen	111.75	111.81
European Currency Unit	1.1190	1.1217**

* 120 Pts 30/11/93

** European Opening in 9:00 A.M. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Date: 30/12/1993

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	3.18	3.25	3.37	3.68
Sterling Pound	5.31	5.37	5.00	5.06
Deutsche Mark	6.12	5.93	5.56	5.18
Swiss Franc	4.00	4.00	3.68	3.59
French Franc	6.50	6.25	5.81	5.37
Japanese Yen	2.25	2.00	1.90	1.81
European Currency Unit	6.62	6.43	6.25	5.50

Interest rates for deposits received in U.S. Dollars, 100,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals

Date: 30/12/1993

Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm
Gold	\$384.95	7.50	Silver	\$5.11	0.115

11 Kmt

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 30/12/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7050	0.7050
Sterling Pound	1.0415	1.0467
Deutsche Mark	0.4071	0.4091
Swiss Franc	0.4795	0.4819
French Franc	0.1199	0.1205
Japanese Yen	0.0079	0.0080
Dutch Guilder	0.3656	0.3654
Swedish Krona	0.0413	0.0415
Italian Lira	0.0413	0.0415
Belgian Franc	0.0413	0.0415

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LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3279/89	Canadian dollar
	1.7339/49	Deutschmarks
	1.9400/10	Dutch guilders
	1.4780/90	Swiss francs
	36.04/08	Belgian francs
	5.8925/75	French francs
	1711.6/3.1	Italian lire
	111.62/72	Japanese yen
	8.3212/13	Swedish crowns
	7.4125/75	Norwegian crowns
	6.7638/88	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4795/05	
One ounce of gold	\$390.50/391.00	

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'Main obstacles cleared' in U.S.-N. Korea nuclear talks

SEOUL (Agencies) — Washington and Pyongyang have agreed in principle on outside inspection of North Korea's suspect nuclear sites and cancellation of a U.S.-South Korean military exercise in 1994, Seoul's state radio said Friday.

"But they have failed to reach a full agreement due to trivial differences between their positions on the scope of the North Korean nuclear inspection," the Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) quoted an unnamed senior South Korean government official as saying.

The report did not elaborate on differences in the talks between North Korean and U.S. envoys in New York Wednesday.

The official was quoted as saying the two sides had also agreed in principle on resumption of high-level contacts between them and of inter-Korean talks, as well as on the exchange of special envoys between North and South Korea.

Washington acknowledged Thursday it had moved closer to agreement with North Korea in the latest talks over the North's suspected nuclear arms development program.

North Korea went further on the outcome, saying it had made a "breakthrough."

The North's Korean Central News Agency Thursday

quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying the U.S. side had expressed readiness to stop its annual "Team Spirit" military exercise with South Korea.

In exchange, the North had basically agreed to resumption of inspections of its suspected facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), he said.

The North would continue to work for a final solution of the nuclear issue through further talks with Washington, he said, without mentioning a date for resumed talks.

"The North Korean spokesman's remarks can be interpreted as meaning it would accept U.S. demands in settling the differences," KBS quoted the Seoul official as saying.

"There is a high possibility that they would reach a full agreement," he said.

North Korea has for months been the focus of international suspicion it is attempting to create fissionable material for an atomic bomb. It has denied the charge but refused to allow international inspection of its nuclear facilities.

Washington wants North Korea to resume talks on the nuclear issue with the South, as well as with the IAEA.

The North has insisted the only way to resolve the dispute is through direct talks with

Washington.

Dialogue between the two Koreas to discuss an exchange of special envoys, which Seoul believes would help settle the nuclear impasse, were stalled by the North's demand for the cancellation of next year's war games, which it describes as a rehearsal for invasion.

In a separate dispatch from Washington South Korea's Yonhap News Agency quoted sources there as saying early January should see more working level Washington-Pyongyang talks followed in mid-January by North Korea-IAEA negotiations and then South-North Korean talks later in the month. An IAEA team would then visit the North with a third round of high-level Washington-Pyongyang talks following in February.

"The United States and North Korea could not reach complete agreement (in Wednesday's low-level talks) as two problems arose at that contact," it quoted the senior government official as saying. "But these problems are not crucial and I don't believe they will become an obstacle," he added.

Though declining to identify one of the problems, the official said the positive statement from Pyongyang Thursday "could be taken as its reply, accepting the U.S.-South Korean position."

The other problem that remained, he said, was the venue for resumption of talks between the IAEA and North Korea — with the North wanting Pyongyang and the U.S. preferring a third country, favouring Vienna.

The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported from Pyongyang Friday that North Korean President Kim Il-Sung had told visiting Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto he expected a third round of Pyongyang-Washington high-level talks in January.

APP said Ms. Bhutto had offered to play a bridging role between Washington and Pyongyang on the nuclear issue and that Mr. Kim had said U.S. troops stationed in South Korea should be withdrawn.

U.S. agencies believe North Korea, which threatened to pull out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) in March, is trying to develop nuclear weapons in its Yongbyon complex North of Pyongyang, with two sites there targeted as most suspect.

Washington has threatened U.N. sanctions including an oil embargo on the isolated Stalinist state should it fail to allow inspections. Japan, Russia and China have all joined in cautioning against pushing Pyongyang into a corner and urge a solution through dialogue.



The bodies of three people lie on the floor of the Heidelberg Pub in Cape Town, South Africa, after gunmen attacked the crowded place (AFP photo).

4 killed in 'barbaric' Cape Town attack

CAPE TOWN (R) — Black gunmen armed with automatic rifles and hand-grenades packed with nails killed four people and wounded five in a crowded Cape Town pub, the second such attack in the city in six months.

Police, offering a 200,000 rand (\$60,000) reward for information leading to the capture of the killers, set up roadblocks on all major roads out of the city.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Three of the victims were young women shot at close range as they huddled in a corner, witnesses said the fourth, a man cut down by gunfire as he tried to halt the carnage.

Several of the dead and wounded were white, witnesses said.

The wounded were named by police as Michael January, 27, Quinton Cornelius, 20, David Degion, 28, Julian Fouché, 20 and Benjamin Braude, 20. Those killed have not so far been identified.

President F.W. de Klerk said the attack appeared aimed at undermining South Africa's transition to majority rule.

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, like Mr. De Klerk a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, described it as a

barbaric act intended to divide South Africans.

Five heavily-armed black gunmen burst into the packed Heidelberg Tavern, a trendy nightclub in the liberal Observatory suburb, just before midnight Thursday.

A grenade packed with nails was flung into the bar but failed to explode. Police said the toll could have been much higher had the grenade exploded.

Mr. De Klerk, reacting with "shock and horror," said in a statement, "There could be no justification for this barbaric deed."

Johnson Mlambo, deputy president of the radical Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), whose armed wing has in the past claimed responsibility for similar attacks, told reporters the PAC did not know who was responsible for the "regrettable" incident.

The tactics used in the Observatory attack were similar to those used by black gunmen who killed 10 worshippers in St. James's Church in Cape Town in July. One of the more than 30 wounded later died. The gunmen are still at large.

Police blamed that attack on the Azanian People's Liberation Army, the PAC's armed

wing, which has been negotiating the suspension of its armed struggle against white rule with the South African military.

The PAC says it will only take its place in the multi-party Transitional Executive Council helping to rule in the election run-up once the question of the armed struggle has been resolved to its satisfaction.

Arch. Tutu described the attack as "a blight on a season of peace and reconciliation."

"I say yet again that we condemn... completely and categorically this dastardly act as we condemn all violence that happens in other parts of the country," Arch. Tutu told reporters.

Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, expected to win South Africa's first all-race election on April 27, said the attack "must stand condemned by all who value democracy, peace and freedom."

Law and Order Minister Hennis Kriel, describing the attack as barbaric, said, "the sheer blood lust which marked this attack represents the kind of depravity to which perpetrators are prepared to sink... to destabilise the democratic process."

They must and they will be stopped."

Russian reformers to get lesser jobs

MOSCOW (R) — Ministers who pioneered bold economic reforms will be given lower-ranking jobs in Russia's new government, which will concentrate on investment and industrial output, Rossiiskiy Vesti newspaper said Friday.

The prediction by Rossiiskiy Vesti, the official government newspaper, would indicate that ministers favouring slower reform have won out over radicals after Russian voters rebuffed reformers in parliamentary elections on Dec. 12.

The newspaper, quoting "competent sources," said President Boris Yeltsin was close to approving the composition of the new government.

Industrialist Oleg Soskovets would become the most senior deputy prime minister of three, and reformer Boris Fyodorov would be given a ministerial job.

Mr. Fyodorov is now deputy prime minister, a job that carries a higher rank than ministers.

Yegor Gaidar, the man who has masterminded reforms designed to transform Russia into a market economy, would stay in office as a deputy prime minister, but would report to Mr. Soskovets.

"The leitmotif of next year's policies will be investment, shoring up industrial decline and supporting agriculture," the newspaper wrote.

Rossiiskiy Vesti's editor-in-chief, Valery Kucher, told Reuters he was convinced the newspaper's information was correct. "We learnt all this from government sources. This information is true."

Rossiiskiy Vesti said Central Bank Chairman Viktor Gerashchenko would keep his job.

Reformers say Mr. Gerashchenko has failed to crack down on inflation, a charge the former Soviet state banker angrily denies, saying monetarist producers are driving inflation up.

Ultra-nationalists, Communists and conservative Agrarians all did better than expected in the Dec. 12 elections and reformist parties will hold little more than a quarter of the seats in the new parliament.

Mr. Gaidar and Mr. Fyodorov, a former international banker brought into the government as finance minister and deputy prime minister at the end of last year, have been the driving forces behind Russia's economic reform programme.

Mr. Fyodorov, whose office

displays the slogan that monetary growth is "the optimum of the national economy", has warned against easing monetary reins and allowing spending to rise.

"The Minister of Finance, with his harsh attitude to credits to industry, must either change his views or not hamper other people in saving the economy," Rossiiskiy Vesti wrote.

If Fyodorov was not prepared to allow new credits to restructure industry and increase Russia's competitiveness, his place should be occupied by a man sharing Gerashchenko's views as far as the reasons for inflation in Russia are concerned.

Western economists view Russia's privatisation campaign as the most successful element of reform to date.

Rossiiskiy Vesti said Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, responsible for privatisation, would probably stay as a minister, but this remained unclear.

"So far his future is unclear. Taking into consideration the results of the privatisation programme... Chubais has completed his job and he could apparently be sacrificed without any damage," the paper said.

Mr. Fyodorov, whose office

Hosokawa defends leadership qualities

TOKYO (AFP) — Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's first New Year news conference turned sour as he rejected criticism that he lacked the ability to lead Japan's fragile ruling coalition.

Mr. Hosokawa denied allegations he had been preoccupied with domestic issues, including much-touted political reform, and that he could not tackle Japan's trade friction with its main partner, the United States.

He hit back at a reporter's question that he lacked leadership in unifying the coalition over tax reform, saying he had to consult coalition partners before announcing government decisions.

"If I make decisions outright myself before consulting anyone, the coalition government will collapse," he said, referring to a coalition impasse on tax reform within the five-month-old regime of seven parties ranging from conservatives to Socialists.

The prime minister said he hoped differences between Washington and Tokyo would be resolved in the New Year.

Mr. Hosokawa said the two countries were seeking a solution, which should be "convincing if not 100 per cent satisfactory," before he meets U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington on Feb. 11.

"It is not that Japan-U.S. relations are shaken," Mr. Hosokawa told the news conference.

The premier refused to take his own stand clear about ways to make up for proposed income tax cuts which could boost spending and stimulate economic recovery.

"I am expecting to see a good idea emerge from an economic panel of officials and coalition partners on tax reform by mid-January," Mr. Hosokawa said.

He said, however, it was necessary for ordinary Japanese to share "costs and responsibilities" in transforming the graying nation into "high quality and affluent" society in the 21st century.

The Finance Ministry has demanded that the unpopular tax on consumption be raised to make up for revenue shortfalls while the Social Democratic Party, a key player in the coalition, leads opposition to the idea. The issue of deficit-covering bonds was an alternative adamantly rejected by the ministry.

As a compromise, the government was reportedly preparing to lower income taxes by more than six trillion yen (\$55 billion) from as early as January and defer raising the three per cent consumption tax for about 15 months.

Mr. Hosokawa reaffirmed that he had "no intention at all" to dissolve the House of Representatives for general elections if his anti-corruption "has failed to pass the current session of parliament which had been extended to Jan. 29."

Pakistan-India talks to tackle Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (R) — Old enemies Pakistan and India resume talks in the new year after a 16-month hiatus that has seen tensions worsen and has forced their first attempt in years to tackle the thorny issue of disputed Kashmir.

Islamabad has welcomed New Delhi's first sign of willingness to discuss all aspects of the two countries' deeply emotional differences over the divided Himalayan region of Kashmir.

However, just hours before the talks, Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials had begun voicing reservations about India's attitude.

Foreign Secretaries J.N. Dixit of India and Pakistan's Shaharyar Khan, the two countries' top diplomats, are to meet in Islamabad on Jan. 2 and 3.

For the first time in years, the issue of Kashmir, the cause of two of the three wars India and Pakistan have fought since independence from Britain in 1947, will be formally on the agenda.

"There will be no more formal talks on bilateral relations if the Indians fail to come up with concrete proposals on Kashmir," warned a senior Foreign Ministry official who declined to be named.

Most Irish see no N. Ireland peace in 1994, poll says

DUBLIN (R) — Only a third of people in Ireland believe a deal will be found to bring peace to Northern Ireland in 1994, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

The survey in the Irish Independent found that 54 per cent held out no hope of a settlement in 1994 that would end a quarter-century of violence in the British ruled province.

Only 34 per cent were optimistic of a settlement, despite a joint peace declaration by British Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counter-

part Albert Reynolds earlier this month that included bigger concessions than ever before from both sides.

That declaration contained a clause by Ireland offering to give up its constitutional claim to the province in the context of an overall peace settlement.

Only 51 per cent of those surveyed said they would vote in favour of ditching the claim as part of an overall deal. A quarter said they would not.

Peace in Northern Ireland topped the list of New Year's wishes in Britain.

Cambodian troops close in on Khmer Rouge base

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Some 2,000 government troops were gaining ground in the ongoing attack on the Khmer Rouge's headquarters at Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia, Minister of Information Ieng Mooly said Friday.

"Our troops are getting closer and closer, the military pressure is working," Mr. Ieng Mooly said, adding that he had no further details.

Leng Sochea, another Information Ministry official, said the push started on Dec. 16 and that government troops already controlled half of the surrounding area.

Anlong Veng is the guerrilla faction's headquarters for all operations in north and central Cambodia and was commanded by the infamous one-legged Khmer Rouge General Ta Mok, who is nicknamed "the Butcher" in Khmer due to his reputation for cruelty when the radical faction was in power.

Co-Premier Hun Sen and other government officials, however, said that Gen. Ta Mok had recently fled Anlong Veng and set up a command base in remote Preah Vihear province near where the Thai, Laotian and Cambodian borders meet.

A diplomat in the capital confirmed reports of military activity in around Anlong Veng, adding it was "not impossible" that the government troops may have taken part of the Anlong Veng area.

The fact that Gen. Ta Mok had fled to set up a base elsewhere was "typical guerrilla behaviour," he said.

"When they (Khmer Rouge) face a big attack, they vanish most of the time," he said.

He said that when government troops launch an assault, the guerrillas react by spreading out and attacking in small groups elsewhere to create divisions and put extra pressure on the government forces.

He added that government forces already faced major logistics problems in maintaining large numbers of troops in remote areas where access is difficult of poor roads and landmines.

Meanwhile, a group of between 80 to 100 Khmer Rouge guerrillas attacks villages in Preah Vihear — near Gen. Ta Mok's fall-back base — on Dec. 22, killing one villager and burning 30 homes, a military report said.

The guerrillas struck again in the same area the following day, destroying a further 16 homes before being repelled by government troops.

The move on Anlong Veng comes at a time when Prince Norodom Ranariddh said that he and Khmer Rouge nominal leader Khieu Samphan agreed to form a working committee to discuss implementing a peace proposal put forward by King Norodom Sihanouk.

The prince, however, complained that Mr. Khieu Samphan would not agree to a ceasefire before the talks.

China ends 1993 by assailing U.K. on Hong Kong

BEIJING (R) — China blasted Britain Friday over plans to widen democracy in Hong Kong, ringing out a year of ugly bickering and portending more tension as the colony's 1997 return to Chinese rule draws near.

Senior leaders and state media took different tacks, ranging from Communist Party chief Jiang Zemin's attack on London's "wrong stand" to Xinhua News Agency's dark blasts at Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten and Britain's alleged ulterior motives.

"Our resolution to restore China's sovereignty over Hong Kong will not change," Mr. Jiang said in a new year's speech printed in the official China Daily.

The message was clear — Britain's days of influence in Hong Kong were limited and London had better get used to it.

"The time when Britain can dominate the world with its gunboat diplomacy is gone for good and you should no longer dream the beautiful dream of being imperialists again," said a Xinhua editorial appearing in many newspapers.

"Do not say we have not warned you," it said.

As if acting on the implied threat, China said a committee formed to chart Hong Kong's transition had "intensified" its work. Some analysts believe the body will act as a pro-Beijing shadow government over the next three years.

Yegor Gaidar, the man who has masterminded reforms designed to transform Russia into a market economy, would stay in office as a deputy prime minister, but would report to Mr. Soskovets.

Zhirinovsky, spurned elsewhere, eyes France

PARIS (AP) — The world's welcome mats are being hastily pulled out from under Vladimir Zhirinovsky, but the undaunted Russian ultranationalist hopes he'll get a warmer reception in France.

Booted out of Bulgaria, harried from Germany and unwelcome in Romania, Austria and Australia, Mr. Zhirinovsky now has his eye on a February visit to Paris.

"I like France very much and I'm thinking about spending a few days in Paris," Mr. Zhirinovsky told France-Info Radio.

"Maybe I'll be able to meet Mr. (Jacques) Chirac and Mr. (Valéry) Giscard d'Estaing, and other politicians well known in Russia," Mr. Zhirinovsky said in a telephone interview from Moscow.

Mr. Chirac, who is Paris' mayor and twice served as prime minister, is a leading conservative contender for the presidential election of 1995. Mr. Giscard d'Estaing, a centrist, was president from 1974-81.

French officials would not rule out a visit by Mr. Zhirinovsky, whose right-wing views have engendered alarm

and earned contempt throughout the Western world.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Mr. Zhirinovsky had not applied for a visa, and no decision had been made to keep him out of the country.

"When he submits a request, we will examine it," the spokesman said under customary rules of anonymity.

City hall spokeswoman Michele Debedde said Mr. Zhirinovsky had not asked to see Mr. Chirac either. "Mr. Zhirinovsky's visit has to be materialised first," Ms. Debedde said. "Then it would depend on many things."

Mr. Zhirinovsky says Europe's borders should be redefined to expand Russia and Germany, at the expense of Central and Eastern European nations — eliminating Romania, for instance. He has suggested Russian nuclear weapons could be used against Germany.

He sparked more outrage in Austria last week, visiting at the invitation of an industrialist who denies the Nazis used gas chambers to kill people during World War II.

Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev called Mr. Zhirinovsky

"a pure fascist," and U.S. Vice President Al Gore called the Russian's views "repulsive."

The source of all that venom was Mr. Zhirinovsky's strong showing in Russian parliamentary elections earlier this month, with his far-right Liberal Democrats taking 24 per cent of the vote.

He was forced to cut short a European tour Wednesday after being ordered out of Bulgaria for insulting the president. Germany, where some have called him the "Russian Hitler," refused to grant him a visa.

A top French anti-racist organisation, the Movement Against Racism and For Friendship Between Peoples, said Thursday that Mr. Zhirinovsky's wish to visit is "an insult to the values that are the basis of democracy and is unacceptable."

Noting the actions by Bulgaria and Germany, the movement said in a statement that "we hope for a similar decision by the French government."

Mr. Zhirinovsky said he was confident of obtaining a visa to visit France despite the German government's decision to

bar him from making a planned 18-day visit.

"I am a friend of France," he told France-Info, speaking in fluent French. "I have never done anything bad to France. It is impossible to refuse me a visa."

He said his European trip was called off because of "misunderstandings" caused by journalists seeking "shocking and dramatic" statements.

"Journalists are always trying to find something evil in my actions, in the programme of my party," he said.

Mr. Zhirinovsky cancelled a visit to Australia planned for next week, saying he was too busy.

The Zionist Federation of Australia had opposed granting Mr. Zhirinovsky a visa because of his reported comments about Russian Jews.

He has even run into problems in the Netherlands, though he hasn't publicly mused about going there.

Row erupts over 'designer babies'

LONDON (R) — A row erupted in Britain Friday over "designer babies" following reports that a black woman is to have a white woman's egg implanted in her to ensure the child is of mixed race. It is the second time in a week that genetic manipulation has prompted protest from doctors, churchmen and politicians after artificial insemination at a Rome clinic.

The latest case involves a man of mixed race and a black woman who are keen the child should resemble its father. The couple are being treated at a pioneering test-tube baby clinic at Bourn Hall, Cambridge. The woman, unable to produce eggs of her own because of a tumour, has opted to have the eggs of a white donor fertilised by her husband's sperm.

In a similar case in Italy, an African woman was implanted with a white woman's eggs and gave birth earlier this year to a white baby, newspapers reported.

"The couple have been carefully counselled and have said they would like to achieve a pregnancy using a donor egg from a white woman fertilised by the husband because he has some white blood," Bourn Clinic Director Peter Brinsden said. "We don't have a problem with that and have more or less decided to go ahead though the final decision has not yet been taken." Mr. Brinsden told the Daily Telegraph newspaper.

Arch. Tutu described the attack as "a blight on a season of peace and reconciliation."

"I say yet again that we condemn... completely and categorically this dastardly act as we condemn all violence that happens in other parts of the country," Arch. Tutu told reporters.

Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, expected to win South Africa's first all-race election on April 27, said the attack "must stand condemned by all who value democracy, peace and freedom."

Law and Order Minister Hennis Kriel, describing the attack as barbaric, said, "the sheer blood lust which marked this attack represents the kind of depravity to which perpetrators are prepared to sink... to destabilise the democratic process."

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Medvedev doubtful for Australian Open

SYDNEY, Australia (Agencies) — Andrei Medvedev faces an agonising New Year after aggravating an old knee injury at the Hopman Cup Friday, perhaps forcing him to miss the Australian Open.

Medvedev, representing the Ukraine along with sister Natalia Medvedeva, hobbled around the court with increasing difficulty as his country was dumped out of the mixed team tournament in the first round by unseeded Austria.

The 19-year-old world number six was beaten 4-6 6-2 6-1 by Alex Antonitsch and hurried away to seek medical advice about the extent of the problem.

"From the second set onwards, the pain was getting worse and worse," said Medvedev, who received treatment for an inflamed knee muscle in Florida before Christmas. "I shall have to check with the doctor."

The Australian Open has already lost several leading attractions, notably Andre Agassi who has had wrist surgery and Boris Becker who is expecting his first child. Michael Chang, John McEnroe, Martina Navratilova and Jennifer Capriati have also decided not to compete.

Ukraine, seeded sixth, was looking shaky even before Medvedev stepped on court. His elder sister was beaten 6-7 3-6 by Judith Wiesner in the opening singles, and the pair eventually scratched from the 'dead' doubles rubber to give Austria a 3-0 winning margin.

The organisers experienced a further headache when tournament stand-in Andrew Foster of Britain could not be found in time to replace Medvedev. His coach, Andrew Jarrett, was hastily drafted to partner Clare Wood in an exhibition doubles match against the Austrian pair, who now face Spain in the quarterfinals Monday.

Players and umpires entered

the world of computer-enhanced tennis Friday but gave only a muted welcome to the new era of high-tech line-judging.

For the first time at a major professional tournament, all line calls at the Hopman Cup mixed team event are being performed by machine instead of humans, a move which some believe could alter the whole tone of the sport.

Entrepreneur Brian Williams pronounced himself "very pleased" with his TEL (teletext electronic lines) system Friday, but leading men Medvedev and Antonitsch were not so sure.

"The machine made three bad calls today," said Medvedev.

"It's not fair to fire all the people. Human beings are better than machines."

Antonitsch felt the system made the game "more boring."

"You feel like you're playing video games ... there's no-one to argue with," he complained. "Somehow it's part of the game questioning calls. I'll have to start talking to the machine."

From the chair, the innovation was viewed more positively. British umpire Jane Tabor admitted the system, which she operated with a hand-held computer, extra concentration. "There's a lot to think about, but the accuracy is superb. You just have to train yourself to do a few extra things. It is a comfortable feeling that you're not going to get any queried calls."

Tabor conceded there had been teething problems, mostly involving the handset which has to be activated before each point. One of the buttons jammed at one stage and the system was turned off for the final 'dead' doubles after several inadvertent bleeps.

Medvedev also did his good-humoured best to sabotage the

whole operation by unplugging the apparatus which organisers had hoped would be given a searching road test by the incomparable John McEnroe.

McEnroe, who once claimed the cyclops service machine recognised him at Wimbledon, is absent through injury but has a worthy replacement in the U.S. team in the shape of Ivan Lendl.

Lendl once blamed his poor form at the Australian Open on "logo skid" from the balls and has long been recognised as a tennis perfectionist. He makes his first appearance Tuesday until then, the beep goes on.

Meanwhile Wally Masur, recovered from the bitter disappointment of being dropped from Australia's Davis Cup final team, has set his sights on a top 10 ranking during 1994.

Masur, the top-ranked Australian at No. 21, was omitted from the Australian team beaten 4-1 by Germany in the Davis Cup final in Dusseldorf in early December.

It was a discouraging end to a year that had seen the 30-year-old rise to a career-high ranking of 15 and a semifinal finish at the U.S. Open.

Masur begins 1994 by partnering Nicole Provis on the Australian team that faces Sweden Saturday in the first round of the \$510,000 Hopman Cup and has vowed to put behind him a series of early round defeats late last season. "In tennis, you can't afford to dwell on the past," he said. "You have to look ahead and even though I've only had a three-week break I'm excited by the opportunity to play again."

Despite his lack of power, Masur believes has a mature-enough game to mount a challenge for a top 10 place.

"For any player, it doesn't matter whether you are 21 years old or 30, if you are making progress it is very satisfying," he said Friday.

Australian yacht takes line honours

HOBART (AFP) — Only 10 of the 37 surviving yachts in the 630 nautical mile Sydney-Hobart Race have so far crossed the finish line here, race officials said early Friday.

They added at least 16 yachts would spend New Year's Eve at sea with the last not expected to arrive here until late Sunday.

In last year's race, most boats had finished within three and a half days. This year's event began in Sydney at midday on Boxing Day.

Organisers described the event, in which Australian yacht Ninety Seven took line honours Thursday, as "the toughest race in the 49-year history of the ocean classic."

One skipper called for tighter safety rules in the race, which he said were out as rigorous as in other competitions. Mountainous seas and fierce winds had battered the fleet, forcing two-thirds of the

race's 104 starters to retire.

Handicap results for the leaders would not be known until late Saturday, organisers said, although the first yachts to finish, Ninety Seven and micropay Cuckoos Nest, were favoured to take the IMS division.

"The international jury has to decide on claims for redress by yachts which diverted from racing to go to the assistance of other yachts in distress," said a race spokesman.

"These include Telecom Mobilenet, sailed by an all-woman crew, which along with Marara, went to the assistance of the small Tasmanian Yacht Wang which Thursday sent out a distress call in Bass Strait."

The Tasman performance Handicap Division was likely to be taken by French-Australian entry Wild Thing. Wild Thing owner and co-skipper Grant Wharington said

the crew of seven Australians and seven French men worked well together despite some language problems.

"They have very strange names for things, in the end we had sign language very well organised and when someone's face went very red we knew there was a problem."

Wharington said he was worried by the atrocious conditions.

"We concentrated on keeping the boat together so it would not break into pieces," he said.

"We really decided we wanted to nurse the boat but when we saw the other bigger boats had started to pull out ahead of us we decided we could try a little bit harder and we made it."

French co-skipper Lionel Pean described his Australian crew mates as "rough diamonds, they drive their boats

hard, I am more methodical but that gets results."

It was a different story on pocket maxi Bobsled, however.

Declaring he was "very disappointed" at coming fifth, co-skipper and French Olympic silver medalist Yves Pajot said the boat would have been better placed if its seven Australian crewmen had not "panicked."

"They were afraid the mast was going to fall down," Pajot said. "They wanted to stop racing and we lost about 12 hours before we could convince them that was premature."

"We were leading at one point, after Brindabella (the race favourite) withdrew. We could certainly have done much better than fifth."

Pajot was one of three professional Freccob sailors on board, the other eight being

French military academy students.

Pean, winner of the 1986 Whitbread Round-the-World Race, said he thought the race organisers would have to tighten safety rules.

"The preparation and safety measures were not as rigorous as in some other competitions. After the notorious 1979 fast-net race, the organisers had to change the entry conditions and I think that Sydney will be forced to do the same thing."

Some 15 people died in the 1979 England-Ireland Fastnet Race, and 23 yachts sank.

The two yachts which sank in this year's Sydney-Hobart were the first sinkings in the race's history. One skipper was washed overboard and survived after spending more than five hours in the water.

Only two people are believed to have died in the entire history of the race.

Cruyff shadow may yet loom large over Advocaat

ROTTERDAM (R) — The appointment of Dick Advocaat as Dutch national soccer coach for next year's World Cup finals suggests the nation's hopes of pushing the self-destruct button may have been broken at last.

Squabbles over squad leadership have dogged one of the world's most exciting sides for most of the major tournaments in the last 30 years.

This propensity for self-destruction has left the Dutch underperforming on the pitch — despite huge potential the honours count is limited to one European Championship.

Advocaat agreed to a request from the Dutch Soccer Union (KNVB) last Thursday to continue in the job after the breakdown of protracted negotiations to persuade former

coach Johan Cruyff to take over for the showpiece event in the United States. Advocaat steered the Netherlands through the qualifying rounds but the KNVB,

several leading players and many fans had hoped Cruyff would lead the squad in the finals.

KNVB Chairman Jos Staatsen said he ended talks with Barcelona coach Cruyff after failing to agree commercial aspects of the contract.

The dispute bore all the sorry hallmarks of previous wranglings and feuding which in the past had put an extra burden on the players in major competitions.

In 1974, Rinus Michels was appointed over the head of coach Fransiek Fadhrone to lead the Dutch in the World Cup finals in Germany. Ironically, Michels was also then coach of Barcelona.

Four years later in Argentina, Austrian Ernst Happel was brought in to supervise coach Jan Zwartkruis.

In 1990, coach Thijs Libregts resigned after leading players disputed team selection and tactics and clamoured for Cruyff to be appointed. Barce-

lona refused to release Cruyff and Leo Beenhakker, now coach of Saudi Arabia, led the squad in the World Cup finals in Italy.

Beenhakker resented working under the shadow of Cruyff. There was constant media pressure at the slightest setback, with the clear implication that Cruyff would have done better.

The KNVB had reached an oral agreement with Cruyff in January 1992 in which he undertook to lead the squad during the 1994 World Cup finals once the team had qualified.

The talks eventually broke down over demands by Cruyff for one month's salary. Barcelona refused to pay him while he was away, and the right to wear his own brand of sportswear.

Some Dutch newspapers claimed later that Cruyff also demanded a 10 per cent share of the KNVB's profit from the World Cup, and refused to

have his picture included in squad photographs.

While few disputed Cruyff's experience would be an asset in the United States, there was a strong sympathy vote for Advocaat as he steered the team through a tough qualification.

Some Dutch newspapers suggested Cruyff was dragging his feet in his talks with the KNVB because he was unsure the Dutch could go all the way and win the World Cup.

"Maybe Cruyff is stalling because he is not sure he can win a prize in America," De Volkskrant wrote in November.

Others firmly backed Cruyff to do the job. "Thanks to the mismanagement of (KNVB Chairman) Staatsen. The orange (Dutch) squad is at the mercy of the second best," soccer magazine Voetbal International Raged.

One of Advocaat's first tasks will be to try and persuade Sampdoria striker Ruud Gullit to return to international soc-

cer. "Early next year I am going to talk to Gullit," Advocaat said last week. Gullit has said he would not play under Advocaat.

While some Dutch players expressed disappointment that Cruyff would not be in charge, Advocaat said he would get on with the job and try to ignore the "Cruyff factor."

"The squad will have problems with (media) rattle-braining than me. I shall have to fight against that. Making comparisons is all part and parcel of the game, but I can live with that," Advocaat told a Dutch newspaper Friday.

"I have complete confidence that we can get excellent results. We have the players to do that."

Advocaat has signed up as coach for the next four years after the finals but will remain under pressure to prove that the talented Dutch can perform without Cruyff at the helm.

Stich lashes out at Becker for player drug abuse claim

DOHA (AP) — Michael Stich has lashed out at fellow German tennis star Boris Becker for claiming many players on the professional circuit are drug abusers.

"It was a stupid comment to make. I don't know why he comes out with such things or from where he gets his ideas," said Stich, who arrived here to take part in the \$525,000 Qatar Open that starts Monday.

"He is old enough to know what he is saying. Sometimes he comes out with some sensible comments but on other occasions, he says something which is not so smart," said Stich, who has eclipsed Becker as the No. 1 player in Germany.

Becker claimed last week that some players use marijuana and cocaine and that

their drug abuse made a mockery of the random drug tests set up by the ATP Tour.

Becker, who won the inaugural title here last January, has decided not to defend his crown, preferring instead to take a two-month break from playing to be with his wife who is expecting the couple's first baby in mid-January.

Stich and Becker have been at odds for most of the last year after Becker refused to play in the Davis Cup. Stich, who has climbed to second behind Pete Sampras in the ATP Tour rankings, proceeded to lead Germany to the title over Australia earlier this month.

Earlier this week, Becker again caused controversy when he said that Stich was prepared to follow his example and refuse to take part in the

opening-round match of the Davis Cup against Austria.

"As yet, I haven't made my mind up about the Davis Cup. If I want to play, I will. If I don't then I won't," Stich said.

"I have never had a problem with Boris Becker. He makes his own decisions and he's started to say some things. I just try and concentrate on my game."

The Qatar Open is being used by many players as a warm up for the first Grand Slam contest of the season, the Australian Open which begins in Melbourne later in January.

Sampras, who is the reigning Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion, also is competing, as are Stefan Edberg, Goran Ivanisevic and Henri Leconte, who has been granted a wild card for the 32-man main draw.

Papin targets Marseille return

PARIS (AFP) — Former French international striker Jean-Pierre Papin said Friday he would like to return to Olympique Marseille when his contract with Italian club AC Milan ended in 1995.

Papin, quoted by French sports daily L'Equipe, said: "I will try and see out my contract here, then I'll look for a new challenge either in France or abroad."

"I only feel comfortable at

Marseille. If I don't sign a new contract at Milan, the only place I would really want to go would be there."

Papin, who will be 31 at the end of his Italian contract, said he and Marseille President Bernard Tapie had planned for him to return.

He added: "I spent six marvellous years at OM. I'm sure my next challenge will be there, more and that's where I see myself going."

Papin, who retired from international football after France's failure to reach the World Cup finals, was in the AC Milan side that lost the 1993 European Cup final 1-0 to Marseille.

The French side were later banned from defending their title and stripped of their championship title in the wake of league match-rigging allegations which are still being investigated.

Jordan's departure leaves void

CHICAGO, Illinois (AFP) — Basketball's greatest player quit the game in 1993, leaving fans around the globe wondering if anyone could ever match the excitement Michael Jordan brought to the sport.

In an era when most players make farewell tours, Jordan never provided supporters a chance to say goodbye.

His Oct. 6 announcement stunned the National Basketball Association (NBA), leaving a still-unfilled void for the title of the league's top team and player.

"I felt it was time to move forward, away from games," Jordan said. "I've reached the pinnacle of my career. I just feel I don't have anything else to prove. I don't have the drive right now. The desire is not there."

Jordan had accomplished more by age 30 than most NBA players achieve in a lifetime. He led the Bulls to a third straight NBA title in June. He won seven straight league scoring titles.

He averaged a record 32.3 points a game and was a star for the U.S. Olympic gold medal "Dream Team" in 1992.

"I want to be remembered as a guy who enjoyed the game, played it 100 per cent, always had something to prove and when that challenge was in front of me, stepped forward and proved it," Jordan said.

"My skills are still good. I'm not on the downside of my career. This is the perfect time to walk away."

Jordan's father, James, was killed in rural North Carolina during the off-season. While saying his decision to retire came before his father's death, Jordan was clearly faced with mortality as he considered his future.

"You realise how short life

is, how something could end so quickly," Jordan said. "It can be taken away from you at any time."

Jordan's father suggested his son retire following his first NBA title in 1991, but Michael still had things to prove. Two years later, following two titles and controversies over his gambling, there was little reason to stay and plenty of reason to depart.

"I guess the biggest gratification I can take out of my father not being here is that he saw my last basketball game. That means a lot," Jordan said.

Jordan did not close the door entirely on a comeback, but his hunger for playing the game must return before he will.

"I'm not making this a never issue," Jordan said. "The word 'retire' means you can do anything you want. If I desire to come back and play again, maybe that's what I'll do. Maybe that's the challenge. I will need someday down the road. I'm not going to close that door. I don't believe in never."

Jordan does believe in spending more time with his wife Juanita and their three children.

"I've been very selfish in my career, to try to get to this point and make sure I've achieved all the things I wanted to achieve," Jordan said. "Now it's time to be a little bit unselfish, to try and spend more time with my family, just get back to a normal life."

For the remaining members of the Bulls, normal was over.

"How do you replace a guy

like that?" Chicago's Scottie Pippen asked. "I'm not Michael Jordan and I could never be. But I know it is now up to me to provide some of the things he provided."

"I can't put on a bright face and say we will be the same team," John Paxson said. "Michael Jordan defined who we are. Now that's gone."

Jordan also defined the NBA, helping spread its fame worldwide. League commissioner David Stern knew his loss was an irreplaceable one.

"An era is closing," Stern said. "Michael Jordan has been one of the greatest players of all time. The contributions he has made to our sport have been enormous. We're all going to miss the thrill of watching him perform."

Even U.S. President Bill Clinton was affected, saying, "we may never see his like again. He will be missed in every small-town backyard and paved city lot where kids play one-on-one and dream of being like Mike."

Or as New York's John Starks put it: "He turned all those things you dreamed about doing into realities."

Houston, powered by Nigerian-born centre Hakeem Olajuwon, began the season as the NBA's dominant team. The Rockets matched a league record by winning their first 15 games and lost just once in the first six weeks of the season.

Seattle, Phoenix, New York and Atlanta also surged to become the league's new elite in the first two months of the new season.



Michael Jordan

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH
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WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1 — Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠AQ643 ♣A5 ♠AK1093
- The bidding has proceeded:
- South West North East
- 1♠ 2♣ 2♦ 3♣
- What do you bid now?
- Q.2 — East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠Q9764 ♠A92 ♠AJ ♠Q65
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠
- 1NT Pass 7
- What do you bid now?
- Q.3 — As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠7 ♠AQ65 ♠K752 ♠732
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠
- 1NT Pass 7
- What action do you take?
- Q.4 — As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠AJ1065 ♠Q6 ♠Q105 ♠654
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠
- 2♣ Pass 7
- What do you bid now?
- Q.5 — Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠K87 ♠58 ♠A9 ♠AQJ87
- The bidding has proceeded:
- South West North East
- 1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠
- 2♣ Pass 7
- What do you bid now?
- Q.6 — Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠KJ76 ♠Q85 ♠AJ943 ♠5
- The bidding has proceeded:
- North East South West
- 1♠ 1♠ 1♠ 1♠
- 1NT Pass 7
- What do you bid now?

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	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		A popular political comedy	The political comedy	WELCOME ARAB SUMMIT
	CONCORD '2' BEAUTY AND THE BEAST		daily at 11:00 a.m.		Special show for children on Thu., Fri., Sat., Sun. at 11:00 a.m.		Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jafajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali in addition to other comedians	Daily 8:30 p.m.	The theatre closes Saturday and Sunday
	Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 4:45, 6:30		HOME ALONE '2'		NINJA DRAGONS		Every night at 8:15	English synopsis available	The Theatre will be closed from Dec. 24, 1993 until further notice.
	Hi America Play, 8:30						Tickets are sold all day		

Israel and PLO fight a war of nerves over autonomy negotiations

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are waging a war of nerves over negotiations to break the deadlock on the launch of Palestinian autonomy at the risk of endangering the whole process.

Israeli leaders admit increasing frustration at PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's tactics and accuse him of rejecting a compromise his negotiators drew up in Cairo this week.

At the same time the PLO charges Israel with bluff and says that a working document with Israel published as a draft accord was never agreed by both parties.

Such tricks could scuttle the negotiations, Palestinian officials said, although they expected talks to resume on security issues probably in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Tabu.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres announced on Wednesday that an understanding had been reached on the major stumbling blocks to implementation of the Sept. 13 autonomy accord.

Mahmoud Abbas, his PLO counterpart in the Cairo liaison committee, said the talks had been constructive, but there was no final agreement.

According to the Israeli Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin were to approve the draft and negotiations would continue on outstanding problems, including security issues.

However, Mr. Rabin said PLO negotiators Nabil Shaath had faxed him a Palestinian version of the document on Thursday. The premier did not say how it differed from the Israeli text.

The Israeli government has not replied to the fax and an angry Mr. Rabin warned he will take his time.

"We will take all the time we need," Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari told AFP. "It could take days or weeks."

Mr. Ben Ari voiced irritation saying: "It is unthinkable that the PLO could reject a document which the two parties agreed upon in Cairo."

Mr. Rabin had said Thursday: "We have to be patient, we are not in a race against time."

But he warned: "If Yasser Arafat officially rejects the Cairo document, Israel will no longer be bound by it."

In the draft, (see below as published by the Jerusalem Post), Israel agreed for the first time to joint manning of border crossings into Jordan and Egypt from the autonomous areas. The size of the autonomous area of Jericho originally proposed by Israel would also be doubled to nearly 60 square kilometres.

"The problem is I can't even be sure that this version reflects the point of view of the

PLO in Tunis," Mr. Rabin

moaned. "I am prepared to discuss the interpretation of principles with the Palestinians," Mr. Rabin added, "but I am not prepared to re-negotiate it."

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who took part in the Cairo talks, said Mr. Arafat had the right not to support the Cairo text but sounded his own warning about such tactics.

"The PLO can hope in this way to extract a few minor concessions from Israel, but if it calls into question the basis of the agreement reached in Cairo, the whole negotiation is in danger of being compromised."

The East Jerusalem Palestinian daily Al Ouds noted Friday that Mr. Abbas stood beside Mr. Peres when the controversial announcement was made in Cairo and did not contradict him.

However it added: "Instead of media games the Israelis should show sincere intentions to end the current situation."

As the squabbling went on the Egyptians announced that they were winding down their mediation efforts led by President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat, interviewed separately earlier this month, said they remain committed to making the landmark Sept. 13 accord.

The interview was broadcast Friday night by Sky Television in Britain and PPS in the United States.

Mr. Rabin said the euphoria at the signing ceremony on the White House lawn in Washington was gone.

"Today there is... a tendency to see all the shortcomings — the difficulties. I was not caught by the euphoria in Washington and I'm not losing hope as a result of the change."

I know the kind of difficulties — the obstacles that would be on the road to implement it," he said.

He said he also recognised that "there is a reduction of the support among the Palestinians and among the Israelis."

Mr. Arafat said in the interview, taped in London on Dec. 14, that he hoped the Israeli withdrawal could be completed on schedule in April.

Mr. Rabin, interviewed on Dec. 20, said "if by the beginning of January... we reach real specific agreement on Gaza-Jericho first, we can meet the date of mid-April."

The main stumbling block is the control of the borders to Egypt from the Gaza Strip and to Jordan from the West Bank town of Jericho, the areas where Palestinian self-rule is to begin.

Mr. Arafat said he hoped that legislative elections would also go ahead as scheduled in July and said any political par-

ty or organisation could take part even Hamas, the main group of militants opposing the peace accord. Some of their leaders, including Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, have declared that they would participate in the next election, he said.

Asked whether Hamas might be part of a coalition, Mr. Arafat replied: "Why not? If they are willing we are open hearts, open-minded."

Mr. Rabin said he was in favour of the elections to promote democracy, "but it might be that the Palestinians, the PLO will decide not to have election." In that case, he said, Israel would not force election because it does not believe democracy can be imposed.

Both Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin said they do not believe that Palestinian or Israeli extremists who oppose the accord can destroy it.

Asked what would happen if

either of them died," Mr. Rabin said, "it will be easier to carry it out if we both will be active."

Mr. Arafat said he faced danger every day, but there had not been a single assassination attempt against him since the accord was signed.

Once the agreement starts to be implemented, Mr. Rabin said he will judge Mr. Arafat on how he controls public order and the initiation of violence. He said he also wants to see how Mr. Arafat deals with Hamas and whether the fundamentalist group changes its attitude towards Israel.

Since the signing, he said, attacks against Israel have continued.

Mr. Arafat used a French phrase to describe Mr. Rabin — "A man who respects his parole d'honneur," which he translated to mean "his friendship, his promises."

Excerpts from the draft agreement

The two delegations went over the main issues in question and agreed:

1. The passages

While Israel remains responsible for external security along the present lines, the crossing of the passages will be arranged as follows:

A. There will be one terminal, with an Israeli window and a Palestinian window, separated by a tinted glass partition. B. At the entrance to the Palestinian section, there will be a Palestinian policeman and a Palestinian flag. At the entrance to the Israeli section, there will be an Israeli policeman and an Israeli flag.

C. All people entering will pass through an electronic gate. They will then be separated: Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza will pass through the Palestinian authority window, where their documents will be checked, after which they will go to the Israeli window.

D. The check will basically be carried out by electronic means so that dignity will not be compromised and time will not be wasted.

E. Each side has the right to check the identity of every person that enters, and has the veto power to refuse their entry. In the case of a suspected person detained by Israeli authorities, they will notify the Palestinian authority, and vice versa.

F. Palestinian visitors will pass through the Israeli window first. Israelis and visitors to Israel will go straight to the Israeli window.

G. There will be one conveyor belt where each side can inspect the luggage...

H. Palestinian VIPs will be exempt from these procedures. I. In case of a physical inspection of Palestinian persons, the search will be carried out by a Palestinian in the presence of an Israeli observer.

J. All customs issues will be carried out in accordance with the agreement to be concluded in Paris.

2. Jericho

In addition to the suggested Jericho-Ouja area the following will be added:

A. The Mussa Alami Project. B. An area to connect between Jericho and Ouja. C. The Karantel Monastery. D. Religious affairs in Nebi Musa will be under the auspices of the Palestinian authority.

E. Palestinian pilgrimage to Murat, under their flag, will be allowed.

F. Joint plans in the Dead Sea as stipulated in the Declaration of Principles.

3. Gaza

A. Privately owned land will remain in private hands under the Palestinian authority, except for the security aspects, as agreed upon.

B. The Israeli side will check whether private land can be taken out of the security zone.

C. The Israeli side will check whether state-owned land can be handed over to the Palestinian authority.



BORDER CLASH: Israeli soldiers watch the bodies of three Arabs killed near the Israel-Lebanon border early Thursday as they had infiltrated through the border fence near kibbutz Dan Israel has blamed Syria for allowing this infiltration (AFP photo)

Israelis claim secret talks with Syria; Damascus denies it

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli and Syrian intellectuals met secretly in European capitals for several months and formulated proposals for resolving the conflict over the Golan Heights, a participant said Friday.

While not government sponsored, the talks initiated by a private Washington-based group were apparently used by both countries as a sounding board to get stalled peace talks moving.

But Syria Friday denied having had secret informal contacts with Israel in European capitals in a search for peace.

An Information Ministry spokesman said that reports of contacts between Syrian and Israeli experts were "unfounded and false."

U.S. and Arab sources said in Washington Thursday that five meetings had taken place in Oslo, London and Rome since May.

A draft "declaration of intentions" had been drawn up on the Golan Heights, and the Syrians had dropped demands for reciprocity on all security measures in any peace accord, the sources said.

Israel's U.S. Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich said Friday that Israeli and Syrian academics had met in Europe but did not have a mandate from their governments.

However, he told Israeli radio from Washington that the fact that Syrians were talking with Israel was "significant and reveals serious intentions in Damascus."

The Information Ministry spokesman, quoted by the official SANA news agency, said that Syria was committed to

the Madrid formula for the peace process.

The conference in the Spanish capital in October 1991 launched bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

Syria has always denied following the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) path in holding secret talks in a bid to break the deadlock.

Official bilateral peace talks between Israel and Syria are expected to resume in early February, following a Geneva summit meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad.

Syria demands the unconditional return of all the strategic heights while Israel demands a pledge for total peace before detailing the extent of any withdrawal from the Golan.

In November, Israeli ministers said secret talks had taken place with Syrians, but Damascus denied the reports and announced it would not talk in secret as Israel wanted.

Fossi Olmert, a member of Israel's negotiating team with Syria under the former right-wing Likud party government, said the talks were held between May and October in Switzerland, Germany, Turkey and Norway.

At the last one, in Oslo, a working paper was developed over the Golan, he said.

The Syrians showed more flexibility over the issues of an Israeli withdrawal and the status of Jewish settlements than in formal peace talks with

Israel held in Washington, Mr. Olmert said.

He would not elaborate on the proposals, calling them only "trial balloons," but very specific trial balloons because the questions discussed were the same as those by the decision makers.

Two other Israelis at the talks were Amos Glibo, a former military intelligence chief, and Zeev Schiff, veteran military correspondent for the respected Haaretz daily. Neither could be reached at office or home telephones Friday.

Israeli reports identified one of the Syrian participants as professor Aziz Shukri of the University of Damascus law school. In Damascus, he could not be reached.

Mr. Olmert said the talks were initiated by the Washington-based foundation, the Search for Common Ground. He said Israeli officials were briefed about the results.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben-Ari said he was "not sure they (the talks) have any significance for the negotiations with the Syrians."

But another official speaking on condition of anonymity said Israel was trying "to sound them (the Syrians) out on how serious they are about peace, what positions might come out of the Assad-Clinton summit."

With little progress being made in resolving differences with Palestinians, he said, Israel was looking for progress with Damascus.

Mr. Olmert said he doubted the talks would continue because of the publicity.

Palestinian opposition moves to heal rifts

DAMASCUS (R) — Palestinian groups opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) peace deal with Israel, whose alliance was shaken by a rift, have moved towards reconciliation but no agreement was made on the future shape of their alliance.

Palestinian officials said leaders of the 10-member alliance agreed on late night talks in Damascus on Thursday to hold more meetings next week to decide how to organise their grouping.

They said the leaders also agreed to cool down a dispute between alliance members the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas.

Palestinian officials said the DFLP and Hamas, who were calling each other liars this week with rival claims about attacks on Israelis in the occupied territories, agreed to stop media campaigns against each other.

Qais Al Samara'i, politburo member of the DFLP, told Reuters the atmosphere of the meeting was "cordial" and both his group and Hamas agreed to solve their dispute within the framework of the alliance.

The DFLP also accused Hamas of trying to dominate the alliance and of making offers to Israel which are unacceptable to other members.

Mr. Samara'i said each party explained its views on the shape of the future leadership of the alliance "and we hope to reach an agreement on this point during the next meeting."

IAF elects new moderate-dominated executive council

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Islamic Action Front (IAF) party Friday elected a 10-member executive council in an unexpected tranquil atmosphere. The results showed the victory of 10 new aspirants while six incumbents retained their seats. Ishaq Farhan was re-elected president of the executive council while Majlis Al Shura by acclamation.

The Majlis Al Shura then elected Abdul Aziz Shreideh as its vice-president and Abdul Aziz Jabbar and Khaled Qudrah as the president's assistants.

Only 106 out of 120 Majlis Al Shura members proceeded afterwards to the election of the 10 executive council members out of 25 candidates; eight members cast empty ballots. Leading members Hamad Saeed and Mohammad Abu Fares refused to nominate themselves to the council despite suggestions by many.

The results showed that moderates won most of the seats on the party's executive council.

The IAF is the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and while Brotherhood membership is not a pre-requisite for IAF membership, most IAF members are Brotherhood members as well.

A majority of IAF members, estimated by the party at between 3,000 and 5,000, supports the moderates. The new executive council and number of votes they obtained are as follows: Abdul Latif Arabiyat (78 votes), Hamzeh Mansour (76 votes), Abdul Hamid Qudrah (73 votes), Bassam Emoush (72 votes), Adnan Jaljouli (70 votes), Ahmad Tannash (69 votes), Ahmad Kafawin (69 votes), Abdullah Akhaileh (68 votes), Na'el Masaleh (68 votes), Mohammad Aweidh (61 votes), Jamil Abu Baker (60 votes), Ibrahim Kilani (57 votes), Tareq Tal (57 votes), Zuhair Zumeili (56 votes), Saoud Abu Mahfouz (55 votes), Abdul Rahim Akout (53 votes), and Ziad Khalifeh (49 votes — a reserve member).

The first meeting of the council was set for next Thursday during which several committees will be formed, mainly a legal committee that will investigate into contestations raised by some IAF members of the results of the Shura council that took place last week.

The IAF also issued a statement in which it condemns Vatican's recognition of the state of Israel that "denotes the submission of the spiritual leadership of the Christian followers to the Zionist domination."

The statement also called on all political parties and groupings in the Arab and Muslim world to denounce this recognition.

Britain demands Sudan reverse decision to expel ambassador

LONDON (Agencies) — Britain on Friday gave Sudan until Tuesday to reverse its decision to expel the British ambassador in Khartoum in a row over the archbishop of Canterbury's visit to the rebel-held south of the country.

"We would expect to receive a response from the Sudanese government by Tuesday Jan. 4," a British spokesman said after Sudan's representative was summoned to the Foreign Office.

Sudanese Charge d'Affaires Abdul Rahman Bakhit was asked to explain why Khartoum had given British Ambassador Peter Stearns two weeks to leave the country.

He was told of the British government's "profound dissatisfaction and regret at the unjustified decision." London expected it to be rescinded if Khartoum "really did value their relationship with the United Kingdom."

The expulsion came amid a tense week for British relations with Sudan.

The row blew up this week when Dr. George Carey, spiritual leader of the Anglican faith, cancelled a trip to the government-controlled north of Sudan, deciding to visit only the Christian rebel-controlled south.

Archbishop Carey argued that the government in Khartoum would have stage-managed any visit to the north.

Khartoum responded that to visit only the rebel south smacked of partisanship.

Sudan took the Carey row a step further on Thursday telling Mr. Stearns, who was already on holiday in Britain, to get out of the country within two weeks.

"We have had quite enough of the British ambassador," a Sudanese spokesman told the BBC.

The Foreign Office said Charge d'Affaires Bakhit had reinforced that view on Friday, telling the British government that Mr. Stearns had been an obstruction to bilateral ties.

Mr. Stearns said he was used to such personal criticism in Sudan, saying: "I am not the only ambassador to have had difficulties of this kind."

He said he was shocked and disappointed.

"Any diplomat's job is to remain in contact while advancing his government's cause — to have that contact broken temporarily is a matter for considerable regret," he said.

"The Sudanese people are generally exceptionally charming and nice — I shall be very sorry if I have to leave," he said.

Archbishop Carey, speaking in Nairobi, said he was saddened Stearns had been told to leave and insisted the Fore-

Abdul Shafi urges Arafat to reform PLO

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Chief Palestinian negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi on Friday urged Yasser Arafat to reform the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and end his single-handed approach to decision-making.

Dr. Abdul Shafi, who arrived here from the Israeli-occupied West Bank earlier in the day, said he would head a seven-man delegation of Palestinian reform advocates meeting with Mr. Arafat at the PLO headquarters in Tunis on Sunday.

Speaking to the Associated Press, Mr. Abdul Shafi said: "There are serious challenges facing the Palestinian people and our objective is to overcome them together through dialogue and democratic methods."

"We hope that our meeting with the PLO chairman will pave the way for wider participation in decision making," he said. "We hope we will reach a common ground."

Mr. Arafat, who became chairman of the PLO in 1968, has been coming under increasing attack from critics who say he should change his autocratic rule and allow more democracy in the movement.

Unlike PLO factions and independent groups that have vowed to wreck the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord, the reformists support the historic agreement but criticise the way Mr. Arafat is handling negotiations with Israel.

They say it is time Mr. Arafat accepts that the PLO is no longer a revolutionary libera-

tion movement but in transition towards a governing authority in Palestinian autonomous areas designated under the September accord.

Tayyar Arouni, a leading activist of the communist Palestine People's Party, said although the outcome of Sunday's gathering with Mr. Arafat could not be predicted, it was the first time that Mr. Arafat had responded positively to calls for changes in the leadership style in the PLO.

"His (Arafat's) acceptance in meet with the delegation indicates that the matter has been taken seriously," Mr. Arouni said.

He expressed hope that the PLO chief would "look with an open mind" at a petition drawn up by reformists and signed by 116 Palestinian personalities.

In addition to Dr. Abdul Shafi, the signatories included several members of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile and two members of the Palestinian negotiating team with Israel, Samit Abdullah and Ghassan Khatib.

Advisers to the delegation Raja Shehadeh, Ali Safarni and Anis Qasem and former PLO Representative to Moscow Nabil Amr also signed the document, which was sent to Mr. Arafat in November.

The four-page memo criticised the PLO leadership's handling of the now stalled negotiations with Israel on implementing the autonomy accord and demanded wider participation in the process.

Ordinary Britons honoured in new classless awards

LONDON (R) — A bus

conductor from the garage who tried unsuccessfully to get a job was among a host of ordinary Britons given awards in a new look New Year honours list. With Mr. Major bidding to make Britain a classless society, the list included gamekeepers, milkmen and midwives along with show business personalities like a singer Shirley Bassey and actor Donald Pleasence. Mr. Major wanted to end the established system whereby leading military figures and civil servants automatically qualified for awards like being made a Member of the British Empire (MBE). After inviting the public to make their own nominations, he was inundated with thousands of requests and eventually picked 70 of them for honours. Bus conductor Anthony Severine, who works at the London garage where Mr. Major went job-hunting years ago, was made an MBE. Asked if he thought Mr. Major might make a good bus conductor, he told reporters: "I don't ask me that and don't ask me if I would make a good prime minister." Other nominees went to the manager of a seaside hotel where Mr. Major stayed and to traffic warden Judith Smith, who said: "I have a difficult job to do. Pleasence, given the Order of the British Empire (OBE), played Lenin, the devil and mass murderer Dr. Crippen, was very surprised to get it, thought the establishment had forgotten me," said the 74-year-old actor. Botanist David Bellamy was astonished to receive the OBE as he is a strident critic of environmental policy in Britain and elsewhere. Bob Scott, who masterminded Manchester's failed bid to land the Olympics in the year 2000, was given a knighthood for trying to put the northern English city on the international stage. Perhaps the most offbeat award was an MBE to charity fundraiser Steve Gilks, whose stunts have included travelling from one end of Britain to the other in a shopping trolley. He has also completed the same journey on a motorised bar stool.

Clinton skips spotlight, joins talkfest

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. (R) — President Bill Clinton all but vanished from public view to attend the Renaissance Weekend, an annual talkfest where 1,000 invited guests ponder and debate everything from love to politics to Bosnia. With topics ranging from "what I've learned about love" to "investment perspectives '94," the meeting is perfect for a minutiae-minded president who has eagerly participated in 10 of the 13 New Year gatherings. But this is the first time he has attended as president, putting Renaissance on the national spotlight like never before despite organizers' efforts to keep a modicum of secrecy about the event. "It's a private family event," said chief organiser Linda Lader in explaining why reporters would be told only so much about the gathering. Mr. Clinton attended a session Wednesday night that might come in handy given his record: "a whoops! Mistake! Their lessons and consequences." He sat in on a Thursday seminar on peace prospects in Bosnia and the Middle East. Later came another possibly handy roundtable entitled "oh by the way, Mr. President may I suggest?" an aside about 30 people were asked to step in the podium for two minute presentations of advice for Mr. Clinton. Those who advised included Democratic Governor Evan Bayh of Indiana and 13-year-old Trevor Smith. Everyone invited went a large namecard around his or her neck to make conversation easy and one of the rules is that everyone is addressed by first name only — with one exception to Mr. Clinton. Ms. Lader said, because it would not seem presidential to have a namecard. Mr. Clinton will be called the traditional "Mr. President" instead of "Bill," since even his lifelong pal and White House Chief of Staff Thomas McElarty calls him Mr. President.

Israeli-backed gunman wounded

TEL AVIV (R) — A

roadside ambush in the south of Israel killed a Palestinian militant and wounded an Israeli soldier. The militant was identified as a member of the PLO's Fatah faction.

The Israeli soldier, a 23-year-old reservist, was wounded in the leg and is recovering in a hospital. The militant was killed by a soldier's gunfire.

The incident occurred on a road between the towns of Be'er Sheva and Ashdod. The militant was travelling in a van.

The Israeli soldier was part of a patrol that was conducting a search for weapons in the area.

The militant was carrying a rifle and a handgun. He was also carrying a bag of explosives.

The Israeli soldier was not injured by the explosives. He was only wounded by the gunfire.

The militant was killed by a soldier's gunfire. He was not injured by the explosives.

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